WAN-KŌ: A STUDY ON A CHINESE GENRE IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF WESTERN GENRE THEORY

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ABSTRACT

Wan-ko (the pallbearer's songs) is a genre which became popular among the literati in China during the Six Dynasties. Its genesis has been attributed to two yüeh-fu songs, "Hsieh lu" and "Hao-li," which were originally sung by the pallbearers in funerals to send off the spirit of the dead, lamenting the brevity of life and the inevitability of death. In these epochs of upheaval, when the intellectuals were faced with death and changes, they found in these two folk models a convenient form for the expression of their philosophy of life, an attempt to attain spiritual detachment from their chaotic age. Thus the genre wan-ko has had a socio-historical existence in the Chinese literary tradition. By studying the poetological documents written contemporary with the wan-ko poets, the object of a historical definition of the genre is established. In the perspective of the western genre theory recently developed by the theorists of poetics, three types of generic rules are required for the reconstruction of the norm of wan-ko: (1) a set of pragmatic rules which specify how the genre is used in communication; (2) a set of semantic rules which describe the typical themes shared by all texts of the genre; (3) a set of syntactic rules which define the structures manifested in the relations between the thematic elements of the genre.

These three sets of rules reconstructed from the wan-ko text are found to be interrelated to one another and unified under the context system of the genre. Hence, wan-ko is defined as a genre not only because it is a historical reality, but also because it is a system guided by a coherent theory.

CONTENTS

Preface

Imagine some Chinese intellectuals of the Six Dynasties drinking in a hall. They were, in fact, quite drunk. Someone stood up and sang a wan-ko. The world was outside, in total darkness, at least for that moment, when they chose to forget it. Wars were still going on. There were famines and plagues. The Lord of Ghosts tolled his bell every day, every hour, every minute. A poet had said: "Outside the gate I can see nothing, but white bones covering the broad plain." The wives were weeping for their husbands. The children were crying for their fathers. The world was inside, dangling in the light, sparkling in the wine, quivering in the song. Someone was singing a wan-ko; everyone could not help weeping. Man's life was like dew on the garlic-leaf, the song said. Death was inevitable and the body was corruptible. Time was fleeing swiftly away and eternal darkness would wrap man in its shroud. The feeling of pain and the presence of death crept in to shadow the moment of happiness. The wan-ko reminded them of what they were: man in his own time.

As we look at it today, the singing of wan-ko seems pathetic, grotesque, or even morbid. But for the singer and the listener of wan-ko, it was a historical reality. It was a form which arose out of their cataclysmic epochs, a dream to be realized and recognized immediately, and a model for their poetic expressions: the paradox of

pleasure and grief, the dualism of life and death and the rupture of the political and the escapist selves. It was, in short, a genre.

By genre, I refer to a linguistic model of (literary) discourse, which has had a socio-historical existence in the literary competence of a given culture. Being articulated, it orders an individual work in the system of literature. Literature is a system, and a genre is an institution in which the individual talent is to be recognized in the context of this system.

For a student of comparative literature, the concept of genre is essential because it provides the only possible bridge over the immense gap between two distinct literary traditions. As for a student of Chinese literature, the issue of genre is crucial because a systematic classification of genres is still lacking. Although Liu Hsieh took the first step centuries ago towards a system of Chinese literature by his methodological definitions of genres, it has been ignored since then. Hence, the immediate task facing the students and scholars of Chinese-Western comparative literature is a systematic and methodological classification of Chinese literary genres in the light of western genre theory, which has been brought into a new era in recent years by the theorists of poetics, such as Tzvetan Todorov, Marie-Laure Ryan, etc. Failing this, Chinese-Western comparative studies are destined to prejudice and misunderstanding.

My approach to the definition of wan-ko is therefore comparative as it is a study on a Chinese genre in the perspective of the western genre theory. The genre wan-ko has been taken up for study not because of its idiosyncratic characteristics, but because it represents the Chinese elegiac temperament of literature in an age of upheaval: realistic and imaginary, beautiful but sad, temporal as well as spatial in structure. Yet, the genre has been generally ignored by critics all through these centuries.

Owing to the limitation of time and ability, much of my original plan has not been worked out and has to be left to future study. For example, I have not been able to bring out the relationship between the genre wan-ko and its neighbouring genres in the system of Chinese literature. Moreover, a comparative study of wan-ko and western elegy will surely highlight certain important discrepancies between the two mutually isolated literary traditions.

I am thankful to many scholars at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, for their advice and encouragement. I am indebted to Professor Wai-lim Yip, who has opened up many perspectives in Chinese-Western comparative literature to me, especially the generic approach to literature. To Dr Chou Ying-hsiung, who has spent so much time and effort in reading and making comments on my manuscript, I owe many valuable suggestions for the improvement of the organization and

style of this thesis.

ABBREVIATIONS

BIHP	Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊
HJAS	Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies
KHCPTS	Kuo-hsüeh chi-pen ts'ung-shu 國學基本叢書
SKCSCP	Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chên-pen 四庫全書珍本
SPPY	Ssu-pu pei-yao 四部備要
SPTK	Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an 四部叢刊
SSCCS	Shih-san-ching chu shu 十三經注疏

INTRODUCTION:

THE GENRE THEORY

First of all, some words from the "Lun-wên" 論文 (Discourse on Literature) of Ts'ao P'i 曹丕 (187-226):

> Men of letter look down on one another, and this has been so since the ancient times.... Men are good at knowing [the merits of] themselves. But there is not only one form [t'i 体] of writing; few can be good at all [forms of writing]. Hence, each one with one's own merits looks down on the short-comings of others.[1]
>
> 文人相輕，自古而然----夫人善於自見，而文非一体，鮮能備善，是以各以所長，相輕所短。

Although we have refrained from translating the term "t'i"[2] into "genre," it is clear that Ts'ao P'i is referring to the concept of genre from what he has said

[1] Ts'ao P'i, "Lun-wên," in Tien-lun 典論, in Chung-kuo li-tai wên-lun hsüan 中國歷代文論選, ed. Kuo Shao-yü 郭紹虞 (Hong Kong: Chung-hua 中華書局, 1979), I, 124.

[2] The basic meanings of the term "t'i," as given by Bernhard Karlgren in his Grammata Serica Recensa, are "body," "embody," "form, shape," "category, class" and "indication of divination." "These basic meanings of this word destined it to involve such very important philosophic ideas as e.g. 'essence', 'whole, complete' or '(a phenomenon) embodying the essence', '(a part) representing the whole'...." See Ferenc Tökei, Genre Theory in China in the 3rd-6th Centuries (Liu Hsieh's Theory on Poetic Genres) (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1971), pp. 12-13. Hsü Fu-kuan 徐復觀, in his study of Wên-hsin tiao-lung 文心雕龍, argues that the term should mean "style" but not "genre." Despite his vigorous arguments, his basic mistake is the false dichotomy of "form" and "content." It is obviously wrong to say that "style" comes from figure of speech while "genre" comes from subject matter. See Hsü Fu-kuan,

and what he is going to say a few paragraphs later.

> The essence of writing is one, but its forms are different. For tsou (memorial) and i (deliberation) should be elegant; shu (letter) and lun (disquisition) should be logical; ming (inscription) and lei (dirge) should be factual; shih (poetry) and fu (rhymeprose) should be ornate.[3]
>
> 夫文本同而末異，蓋奏議宜雅，書論宜理，銘誄尚實，詩賦欲麗，

Certainly we cannot criticize Ts'ao P'i for what he has not attempted to do: his taxonomy does not offer a complete list of the genres of his age, nor has he given an exact definition for each genre mentioned. At any rate, this was the first classification of genres in Chinese literature, and it served as a model for the later ones.

But why classify? Why should there be any classification at all? Although the concept of genre has been established as a discipline of its own since Plato and Aristotle, one which is as old as that of literature, it has been constantly under attack from critics like Croce. Looking back at the two passages of Ts'ao P'i for some enlightenment, we can see that two reasons have been

Chung-kuo wên-hsüeh lun-chi 中國文學論集, 4th ed. (Taipei: hsüeh-shêng 學生書局, 1976), pp. 1-18.

Actually, in the Six Dynasties at least, the term "t'i" was used to mean both "style" and "genre" indiscriminately. See Ch'i I-shou 齊益壽, "Liu Hsieh ti lun-wên pei-ching, lun-wên kuan-tien yü wên-hsüeh p'i-p'ing" 劉勰的論文背景, 論文觀點與文學批評, Kuo-li p'ien-i-kuan kuan-k'an 國立編譯館館刊, 9, No. 1 (June 1980), 27-28.

[3] Ts'ao P'i, I, 124.

given. First, the genres are out there. There are different forms of writing, historical as well as cultural, whether we acknowledge their raison d'être or not. Second, the concept of genre is essentially useful. The writer must be good at the genre he is using. The critic must possess an adequate knowledge of various genres, or he will easily fall victim to prejudice. This second reason inevitably leads us to the theory of literary competence.

For an account of the theory of literary competence, we have to go back to the linguistic model proposed by Chomsky. In brief, language as a means of communication is not just a system of signs. In different communicative situations, the users of a language must apply different sets of generic rules which govern both linguistic utterances and the interpretation of the utterances produced. Hence a grammar of the language must also be able to describe the user's knowledge implicit in the use of language in various types of discourse, viz. his linguistic competence.

Linguistic competence includes not only the user's knowledge of what we call "ordinary language," but also that of literature. For literature must make use of language as its medium of transmission and therefore constitutes different types of linguistic discourse. Accordingly, genres in literature are in fact the classification of various types of "literary" texts, each specified by a set of generic rules according to which

writers produce acceptable literary texts and readers interpret their works. To summarize in Ryan's words:

> Once we realize that genres are a matter of communication and signification, generic taxonomy becomes tied to the same type of assumption that underlies current linguistic theories: namely that the object to account for is the user's knowledge. According to this assumption, the "communicative competence" of the members of a culture includes a generic component, through which they are able to handle a variety of linguistic artifacts such as tragedies, poems, jokes, and advertisements. The significance of generic categories thus resides in their cognitive and cultural value, and the purpose of genre theory is to lay out the implicit knowledge of the users of genre.[4]

Hence the concept of genre is essentially useful because it represents the literary competence of the members of a culture, thus bridging the gap between literary creation and literary criticism.

The uses of literary genres, therefore, can be looked at from two opposite but complementary perspectives: namely the perspective of the writer and that of the reader/critic. They are opposite to each other because they are at the two ends of the process of expression and interpretation of a literary text within a genre. They are complementary as the genre is a collective memory of both the writer and the critic, who share, work through and inform each other of their common generic experience. From

[4] Marie-Laure Ryan, "Introduction: On the Why, What and How of Generic Taxonomy," Poetics, 10 (1981), 111-12.

the perspective of the writer, the writing of a new work is the realization of a genre. From the perspective of the critic, a genre is the total form of all the individual works within the category. The relationship between writing and genres is thus described by Claudio Guillén, as "the empirical relevance of artistic genres":

> Now, the concept of genre looks forward and backward at the same time. Backward, toward the literary works that already exist. Forward, in the direction of the apprentice, the future writer, the informed critic....Looking toward the future, then, the conception of a particular genre may not only incite or make possible the writing of a new work; it may provoke, later on, the critic's search for the total form of the same work.[5]

According to Guillén, the influence between genres and writing takes both directions. For the writer, a genre is a structural model. The disparate ideas and vague emotions of the writer are to be expressed as a unified, structural whole in the form of a text which he has found and eventually reshaped. In doing so, he can only rely on the generic model that he has taken up for certain principles of composition and structuring, of matching matter to form. Hence, a genre is essentially functional, instrumental, and "only the generic model is likely to be effective at the crucial moment of total configuration,

[5] Claudio Guillén, Literature as System: Essays toward the Theory of Literary History (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971), p. 109.

construction, com-position."[6]

But it is equally obvious that a generic model, while assisting the writer in the form-making and structuring of a new work, can never be completely taken over or transformed into the work. The model is only an abstraction of preexistent works which manifest certain similar principles of composition and verbal properties. In the process of artistic creation, the writer always alters and reshapes his original model, taking only those structural features which he regards as eminent and crucial for his own embodiment. Thus, although a genre has its own stable features, it does not remain fixed and unchanged. On the contrary, genres are often described as contingent, subject to historical changes with the addition of new works.[7] So it is the critic's task to capture the total form of a new work, ordering it within the already existing literary system and eventually modifying the same system with the new entry. In this procedure of ordering and re-ordering, the work can be said to have acquired a "historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together."[8] Again, it is

[6] See Guillén, pp. 110-20.

[7] See René Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1956), p. 227; also Guillén, pp. 73, 116.

[8] T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," in his Selected Prose, ed. John Hayward (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1953), p. 23.

the concept of genre which provides the intermediary category between the concrete work and the abstract literary system. In this respect, a genre can be defined as "the peculiar between individual works and poetry considered in general; and the theory of genre is accordingly the apprehension of the peculiar in poetry, namely from a peculiar aspect, the aspect of division."[9] Being the peculiar between literature in general and individual works in particular, a genre is at once changing and unchanged, concrete and abstract. Compared with the general aesthetic rules of literature, a genre is a changing category of concrete works. But contrary to its individual literary texts, a genre is an abstract classification with its unchanged rules. Now it is clear that the peculiar aspect of a genre is exactly its mode of classification.

Where the mode of classification is concerned, we are bound to ask the question: are generic taxonomies natural, existing "out there" as historical facts, or conventional, arising from the theorists' attempt to make divisions? This is not simply a question of whether this or that, as most traditional classifiers supposed it to be. In a study of this dualism, B. E. Rollin says:

> There is, it seems to me, only one possibility which can serve as a theoretical underpinning for traditional classifications, while also

[9] Tökei, p. 10.

> explaining the almost total failure of classifiers to adopt a methodology or theoretical stance explicitly. It must be the case that such theorists have implicitly presupposed the classic dualism between *nomos* and *physis*, between what is natural and conventional, real and arbitrary, *de facto* and *de jure*.[10]

The dualism between conventionalism and naturalism may in fact account for some of the phenomena we encounter in the traditional classifications of Chinese literature.

When Ts'ao P'i said that there were different forms of writing, his statement actually suggested implicitly that literary genres were naturally given. And we have to admit that Ulrich Weisstein seems to be justified in saying that "until very recently no systematic classification of literary phenomena according to their generic qualities was attempted in the Far Eastern countries."[11] At least this was the case in China. It can be observed that traditional categories of Chinese literature has been closely associated with anthology making.[12] For the Chinese anthologists, generic classification involves nothing other than the labour of listing all those genres

[10] Bernard E. Rollin, "Nature, Convention, and Genre Theory," *Poetics*, 10 (1981), 129-30.

[11] Ulrich Weisstein, "The Study of Literary Genres," in *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective*, eds. Newton P. Stallknecht and Horst Frenz, rev. ed. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1971), p. 256.

[12] James Robert Hightower, "The *Wên Hsüan* and Genre Theory," *HJAS*, 20 (1957), 512-32; rpt. in *Studies in Chinese Literature*, ed. John L. Bishop, Harvard-Yenching Institute Studies, 21 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 142-47.

which have found their way into the literary tradition. No system is needed. Nor is there any theory given to support those categories proposed. Even such an exceptional critical work as Wên-hsin tiao-lung (The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons), in which Liu Hsieh 劉勰 attempts to justify each generic label (ming 名) by finding out its underlying principles (li 理), is not completely free from the faults of naturalistic assumption. One of the most prominent examples of his naturalistic commitment is to put the traditional "genre" yüeh-fu 樂府 into his classifications,[13] while the poems collected in the anthology are obviously too diversified to be unified into a single genre. After all, the main difficulty with generic naturalism is that it "provides no decision procedure for adjudicating and settling such disagreements [on generic classifications]."[14]

The other end of the dualism is the nominalistic approach to generic classification. Theorists of this orientation hold the opinion that genres of all types of discourse are conventional and arbitrary. Thus they should be constructed for analytical purposes; in other

[13] Tökei argues that Liu Hsieh's purpose of putting yüeh-fu in his classifications "was not to prove the genre nature of yo-fu, but, on the contrary, to demonstrate the heterogenous contents of this notion." See Tökei, p. 115. Although Tökei's efforts in defending "Liu Hsieh's greatness as a theoretician" is to be much admired, his arguments seem to be ungrounded in view of the entire scheme of Wên-hsin tiao-lung, in which chapter 6 to chapter 25 are devoted to the definitions of genres.

[14] Rollin, 131.

words, one should draw the divisions according to the most useful analytical scheme. It is no surprise that generic schemes advocated on this basis are theoretical and systematic: each genre within a scheme often differs from another by the presence or absence of a "central feature." Categories of this kind are synchronic, devoid of any concrete historical reality.

The faults of the nominalistic approach to genres are even more obvious. As Ryan has said,

> Since the nominalist denies the existence of "naturally given" or predefined units, he cannot present his model as an account of the user's awareness of already distinct discourse categories.[15]

We have mentioned earlier that literary genres are essentially useful because they represent the literary competence of their users within a culture. Now it is clear that nominalistic classificatory schemes do not have such a social and cognitive reality and their usefulness in linguistic communication is not to be found. Hence they belong to the general poetics, but not to the historical poetics, in which the concept of genre is conceived.

Yet the most dangerous implication of such nominalistic classificatory schemes is to apply them cross-culturally as universal systems. In a study of the incongruity between analytical categories and ethnic

[15] Ryan (1981), 112.

genres, Dan Ben-Amos suggests that generic taxonomy should be based on the native communication system, and he emphatically warns against the danger of changing "folk-taxonomic systems which are cultural bound and vary according to the speakers' cognitive systems into culture-free, analytical, unified, and objective models of folk-literature."[16] He explains:

> The basic problem inherent in any analytical scheme for folklore classification is that it must synchronize different folklore communication systems, each with its own internal logical consistency, each based upon distinct socio-historical experiences and cognitive categories.[17]

Although the assertions of Ben-Amos are basically derived from his study of folklore genres, they can be applied equally well to all literary genres which are cultural bound and have a socio-historical and cognitive reality.

For what we are concerned, the problem that Ben-Amos has raised is especially crucial in Chinese-Western comparative studies, in which two completely distinct and mutually isolated literary traditions are involved. Despite the fact that "no systematic classification of literary phenomena according to their generic qualities was attempted" in traditional Chinese literary criticism,

[16] Dan Ben-Amos, "Analytical Categories and Ethnic Genres," Genre, 2, No. 3 (Sept. 1969), 276.

[17] Ben-Amos, 275.

one should not be tempted to impose western analytical categories on Chinese literary texts. For within the Chinese literary tradition, there is and must be a generic system of native categories, historically and culturally determined, and "each with its own internal logical consistency." Some comparatists, for example, apply the tragedy-comedy dichotomy to Chinese "drama," and they inevitably isolate a corpus of Chinese plays from their literary tradition, taking them out of their cultural and historical context system. Obviously, the foreign categories of tragedy and comedy can never reflect the socio-historical reality of these Chinese plays and how these linguistic artifacts were used by the native playwrights and audience. "This is," says Ben-Amos, "methodologically, if not logically, impossible."[18]

Certainly, comparative literature should not be rendered impossible because of the incongruity between analytical categories and ethnic genres. Happy are those who can manage to find a compromise between these two mutually exclusive systems. One such compromise is proposed by Ryan as follows:

> The gap between ethnic and analytical approaches to the problem of genre can be bridged by viewing analytical categories as building blocks for the characterization of genres, rather than as abstract generic concepts in themselves. The analytical categories underlying genre theory

[18] Ben-Amos, 275.

> will then be elements such as "narrative", "fictional", "exemplary", "free" vs. "bound" in form, etc., rather than "myth", "legend", "riddle", etc....The usefulness of these schemes resides in their ability to form the basis of cross-cultural comparisons of genres, a task that would remain impossible if one dealt exclusively with ethnic categories.[19]

There are two things to be observed. First, ethnic generic labels used in a given culture should be always retained and is not to be replaced by analytical or foreign generic names, because they "often reflect their symbolic value in the network of formal communication and their position in the cultural cognitive categories."[20] Second, following Ryan's suggestion, although we cannot substitute analytical categories for ethnic taxonomy, we can use them as descriptive elements in the characterization of ethnic genres.

It should be noted here that, in our present study on the Chinese genre wan-ko 挽歌, the original generic name is retained rather than translated into "elegy" or some other English generic label. For it is clear that the generic name "wan-ko" is historical derived and its meaning--the pallbearer's songs--has its distinct cultural cognitive value. Furthermore, foreign generic terms such as "narrative", "fictional", "spatial" vs. "temporal", etc. will be employed only as analytical tools

[19] Ryan (1981), 113.

[20] Ben-Amos, 295.

or "building blocks" in a theoretical and systematic construction of the genre.

Similarly, a compromise has to be reached between the naturalistic and nominalistic approaches to generic classification. Such a compromise must transcend the natural-conventional dualism. The procedure of generic study proposed by Tzvetan Todorov may shed light on our present problem. He postulates that literary study always moves from the particular work to literature generally (or genre) and vice versa. In accordance with this "double movement," there exist two types of genres: namely historical genres and theoretical genres. Generally speaking, historical genres "would result from an observation of literary reality" whereas theoretical genres "from a deduction of a theoretical order."[21] Then he says:

> Such a study [of genres] must constantly satisfy requirements of two orders: practical and theoretical, empirical and abstract. The genres we deduce from the theory must be verified by reference to the texts: if our deductions fail to correspond to any work, we are on a false trail. On the other hand, the genres which we encounter in literary history must be subject to the explanation of a coherent theory; otherwise we remain imprisoned by prejudices transmitted from century to century....The definition of genres will therefore be a continual oscillation between the description of phenomena and abstract theory.[22]

[21] Tzvetan Todorov, The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre, trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 7, 14-15.

[22] Todorov (1975), p. 21.

Obviously, what Todorov calls "theoretical genres" are in fact the "analytical genres" that we have discussed above. Now, even though a theoretical genre can be "verified by reference to the texts," it does not necessarily mean that it corresponds to a literary reality in a given culture. Hence we should say that this type of genres offers a very limited perspective. On the other hand, historical genres always reflect the communicative system of a culture. Thus we postulate that the definition of genres should always start from the literary reality, from historical genres. But in order to really transcend the natural-conventional dualism and not to be "imprisoned by prejudices transmitted from century to century," the definition of a genre, or generic classification in general, must be guided by "a coherent theory." In other words, the generic model constructed must form a system: the relations between its constitutive elements are necessary, theoretical and not arbitrary.

Accordingly, there are two requirements to be fulfilled in our definition of wan-ko. First of all, we must demonstrate that wan-ko, being a genre, is historically derived. It represents a part of the literary competence of its users within a certain historical period and has a social and cognitive reality. Besides, the genre actually constitutes a system so that a set of generic rules which specify the system and are guided by a coherent theory can be constructed.

However, our immediate problem is: how can we prove

that a genre has a historical reality? Whether a historical genre is possible largely depends on the process of definition. To be sure, it would be misleading to define a historical genre by creating the object of definition from its texts. But, according to Guillén, the "circular movement" is inevitable in the definition of a genre.

> It could be said that my definition of the picaresque, in either the strict or the broad sense, is not historical enough; and the objection would be well found. Mine is certainly an a posteriori description...of a group of works as they appear and are available to the contemporary reader. However, it should be said that no history of a literary form can be started without a preexisting idea of what the form might be: there must be an object for the historian to write a history of. Within this circular movement, then, my definition belongs to the preliminary phase--the attempt to delineate as clearly as possible an object of study.[23]

If the defence of Guillén is justified, the conclusion would seem to be that no historical genre is possible. Then we are forced to agree with the nominalist that genres are in fact conventional, arbitrary.

But we should not have been so pessimistic. In a pioneering article, Gustavo Pérez Firmat shows that there is "a means of circumventing the circularity that Guillén sees as the major obstacle to a historical definition of a genre."[24] Following Hans-Robert Jauss, Firmat proposes

[23] Guillén, pp. 97-98.

[24] Gustavo Pérez Firmat, "Genre as Text," Comparative Literature Studies, 17, No. 1 (1980), 20.

that such a definition can be achieved through the "historization of the poetics of genres." In his scheme, a historical generic norm can be reconstructed as a "genre text" from a systematization of the "poetological documents" which are contemporary with the works of the genre. This genre text can be characterized by three types of information, or generic functions, provided by the generic metalanguage of a given moment.[25]

> Constative information, as the name implies, asserts the existence of a class; deictic information points out its membership; and criterial information gives the basis for the grouping.[26]

Insofar as the object of definition is concerned, constative function is essential for it asserts an a priori historical reality of the genre. Thus the genre text, apart from the concrete individual works it subsumes, has "a discursive existence" which is at once real and historical; for "it has been constated in discourse."[27]

Then following the scheme of Firmat, in our definition of wan-ko, we shall first of all examine all the poetological documents of the genre which were written within the same period of time when wan-ko poems

[25] Firmat, 16-19.

[26] Firmat, 19.

[27] Firmat, 20.

were composed. According to the fact that the genre wan-ko is explicitly mentioned or talked about in these documents, our proper object of definition is given and we can be sure that the genre has had a historical reality in the Chinese literary tradition. In other words, wan-ko is not just an abstract concept; it was also a concrete cultural experience and was recognized as a genre by its users.

Among all the poetological documents, anthologies constitute a special type of generic metalanguage that we should particularly pay attention to. Usually, they provide the most fertile sources of deictic information, which "serves as an instrument for corpus formation and delimitation."[28] In addition, together with other poetological documents, they may circumscribe the temporal limits of a genre, indicating the historical development of it. Accordingly, by studying the anthologies which classify a corpus of poems under the wan-ko label and the contemporary criticism of wan-ko, we can outline a history of the development of the genre.

Finally, it is the criterial function of a genre text which provides the generic norm with a unified system. The criterial information of a genre does not only tell us how the genre was used in the communication system of a given culture; it also informs us of the characteristic features and principles of composition of the genre. In

[28] See Firmat, 21.

practice, however, it is often difficult to systematize the fragments of generic metalanguage into a coherent theory. Especially in traditional Chinese literary criticism, critics seldom elaborated a systematic study of a work or a genre. Consequently, it is almost impossible to systematize those fragments of casual commentaries on wan-ko so that its generic qualties can be fully revealed. After all, we have to analyze the corpus of wan-ko poems in order to reconstruct sets of generic rules which define the system of the genre. The reconstruction of the generic norm from the texts does not necessarily weaken the historical definition of wan-ko because its historical existence has already been constated in discourse and the object of definition has been given.

Now, three types of rules seem to be indispensable to the definition of a generic system:

1. a set of pragmatic rules which specify how the genre is used in communication;

2. a set of semantic rules which describe the typical themes shared by all texts of the genre;

3. a set of syntactic rules which define the structures manifested in the relations between the thematic elements of the genre.[29]

These three sets of rules specify the three main types of

[29] Cf. Marie-Laure Ryan, "Toward a Competence Theory of Genre," Poetics, 8 (1979), 313.

relations between the constituent elements of a generic system. While the pragmatic rule directs our attention to the relation between the writer and the reader through the text, the semantic rule deals with the relations between the elements present (signifier) and absent (signified) in the text and the syntactic rule defines the relations between the copresent elements in the text.

As we shall demonstrate in the study of wan-ko, these three sets of generic rules are not independent of one another. On the contrary, there are necessary and logical relationships between them. In the genre wan-ko, we can see that the thematic representation and the syntactic structure are always determined by the pragmatic context of the genre. Hence, the definition of wan-ko in our present study will follow the order of these three sets of rules so that the system of the genre will be manifested in their inter-relationships.

CHAPTER ONE

A GENRE TEXT OF WAN-KO

In Shih-shuo hsin-yü 世說新語 of Liu I-ch'ing 刘義庆 (403-444) there is an account of the idiosyncrasies of two Chin "famous gentlemen" (ming-shih 名士):

> Chang Chan [4th century] was fond of planting pines and cypresses in front of his study. Meanwhile, whenever Yüan Shan-sung [d. 401?] went out for an excursion, he liked to order his followers to compose [tso 作] wan-ko [pallbearer's songs].[1] Their contemporaries said that Chang laid corpses below his house while Yüan marched funerals on the road.[2]
>
> 張湛好於齋前种松柏。時袁山松出遊，每好令左右作挽歌。時人謂張屋下陳屍，袁道上行殯。

The anecdote appears in the chapter under the heading "Free and Unrestrained" (Jên-tan 任誕). In the ancient times, the burial ground of the common people was flat

[1] The term "wan-ko" literally means "songs for pulling the hearse." The character "wan 挽" is originally written as "wan 輓," which, according to Shuo-wên chieh-tzu 說文解字 of Hsü Shên 許愼, means "pulling a cart." See Tuan Yü-ts'ai 段玉裁, ed., Shuo-wên chieh-tzu chu 說文解字注, Ching-yün lau ed. 經韵樓藏版 (rpt. Taipei: n.p., n.d.), XXVII, 14A/57ab.737ab.

[2] Liu I-ch'ing, Shih-shuo hsin-yü, ed. Liu Hsiao-piao 刘孝标, KHCPTS, 244 (Taipei: Shang-wu 商務印書館, 1968), p. 186.

and did not have a mound (fên 墳); it was a tradition to plant pines and cypresses there to indicate that it was a grave.[3] So pines and cypresses gradually became symbols of the graveyard. As for wan-ko, the comment of the contemporaries of Yüan Shan-sung clearly implied that they were songs to be sung in a funeral. Therefore, it was inappropriate to sing wan-ko on an excursion. The behaviours of Chang Chan and Yüan Shan-sung were certainly wild and unruly, but should be in no way peculiar to their contemporary intellectuals. In their epochs of upheaval, it had become a vogue for the ming-shih to openly challenge traditional proprieties and taboos.

Taking the above quoted text as our point of departure, we are informed of at least two things. Firstly, songs of wan-ko were sung or composed during the times of Yüan Shan-sung. Secondly, although the singing of wan-ko should be practised formally in funerals, Yüan Shan-sung and his followers sang wan-ko for entertainment.

It is not known whether Yüan Shan-sung and his followers actually "composed" wan-ko themselves. In Shuo-wên chieh-tzu, the word "tso" is defined as "to start (ch'i yeh 起也)." Tuan Yü-ts'ai in his annotation gives "wai 為(to do, to make)," "shih 始(to start, to create)"

3 白虎通曰：庶人冢墳，樹以楊柳。仲長子昌言曰：古之葬者，松柏梓桐以表其墳丈。 Pines and cypresses, therefore, are two typical images of the graveyard scene in Chinese poetry. For examples, pines and cypresses appear in the graveyard scene in two poems of the Ku-shih shih-chiu shou 古詩十九首：「驅車上東門，遙望郭北墓。白楊何蕭蕭，松柏夾廣路。」「出郭門直視，但見丘與墳。古墓犁為田，松柏摧為薪。」

and "shêng 生 (to beget)" as variant meanings of "tso."[4] Hence Yüan Shan-sung might order his followers to compose (to make or to create) or simply to sing (to do or to start) wan-ko songs. Even if he did compose wan-ko of his own, none of his wan-ko songs is extant today.

According to T'an Tao-luan 檀道鸞 in Hsü Chin yang-ch'iu 續晉陽秋,

> Yüan Shan-sung was good at music. There was an ancient Northern song with the title "Hsing-lu nan." Its lyric was plain and direct. Shan-sung was fond of it. Therefore, he embellished its stanzas and lines, and refined its rhythm and form. Thereafter, whenever he got drunk, he would sing the song. None of his listeners could help weeping. Previously, Yang T'an was good at music and singing, and Huan I was capable of wan-ko. As Shan-sung followed them with "Hsing-lu nan," their contemporaries called them the excellent three.[5]
>
> 袁山松善音樂。北人舊歌有行路難曲，辭煩疎質。山松好之，乃為文共製句，婉其節制。每因酒酣，從容歌之，哀者莫不流涕。初羊曇善唱樂，桓伊能挽歌，及山松以行路難繼之，時人謂之三絕。

From the fact that the listeners could not help weeping when they heard Yüan Shan-sung singing the song "Hsing-lu nan," it is obvious that the song must be sad and grievous in tune. However, there is no clear evidence indicating

[4] See Tuan Yü-ts'ai, XV, 8A/19b.378b. Cf. Chow Tse-tsung, "The Early History of the Word Shih (poetry)," in Wên-lin: Studies in the Chinese Humanities, ed. Chow Tse-tsung (Madison, Wis.: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1968), pp. 208-09.

[5] Quoted in Liu Hsiao-piao's Annotations. See Liu I-ch'ing, p. 186. Cf. Ho Liang-chün 何良俊, Yü-lin 語林, SKCSCP, 3rd ser. (rpt. Taipei: Shang-wu, 1972), 25/7b-8a.

that it is a wan-ko,[6] nor that he has actually composed wan-ko songs of his own originality. From the account of T'an Tao-luan, we also learn that the singing of wan-ko was not a unique practice of Yüan Shan-sung but, even before he became famous for it, Huan I had been a well-known expert at wan-ko.

At the moment, although neither Yüan Shan-sung nor Huan I can be ascertained to have written wan-ko, the two passages provide important generic implications of the group of songs being discussed. It must be obvious that both the authors of Shih-shuo hsin-yü and Hsü Chin yang-ch'iu perceived a group of songs which might well be considered as a whole under the generic label "wan-ko" and that through Huan I to Yüan Shan-sung songs of that group were being performed or even composed. In other words, the existence of the "genre"[7] wan-ko was recognized by the critics of the Six Dynasties as a fact, both historical and sociological in nature. For us, this existence does not depend on the works that the genre subsumes; it is "discursive" in the sense that it is

[6] There is an old title "Hsing-lu nan" preserved in yüeh-fu poetry, but the original song has been lost. Only songs written by later poets are collected. According to Yüeh-fu t'i-chieh 樂府題解, songs of this title are all about "the difficulties in worldly life and the sadness of parting." See Kuo Mao-ch'ien 郭茂倩, ed., Yüeh-fu shih-chi 樂府詩集, KHCPTS, 206-207 (Taipei: Shang-wu, 1968), p. 807.

[7] The word "genre" is used here, for the time being, to refer to a class of works which are perceived as parts of a whole.

reflected in how people talked about it. Once this existence, or this fact of existence, has been constated in discourse, it constitutes a real and proper object of generic study.

So far the "poetological documents" preserved in the two critical works have ascertained only the existence of the genre wan-ko. We have not told where the origins of the genre were or when it really became popular. But these types of information can also be found in the genre text of wan-ko.

Generally speaking, both poets and critics of wan-ko attributed its origins to two yüeh-fu poems: "Hsieh lu 薤露" and "Hao-li 蒿里." According to Shih-shuo hsin-yü,

> [Once] Chang Lun was drunk and [sang songs of] wan-ko, which were so sad and mournful. Huan Ch'ung [328-389] said to him: "You are not a follower of T'ien Hêng, why then are you grief-stricken to this extreme?"[8]
>
> 張驎酒後挽歌甚淒苦. 桓車騎曰:「卿非田橫門下, 何乃頓爾至致?」

The way in which Huan Ch'ung 桓沖 jested with Chang Chan[9] obviously indicated that he believed or assumed that wan-ko had its origins in "Hsieh lu" and "Hao-li," for the two songs had been said to be composed by the followers of T'ien Hêng during the reign of Emperor Kao

[8] Liu I-ch'ing, p. 186.

[9] Chang Lun has been identified as Chang Chan and Lun is the nickname.

of Han 漢高帝 (202-194 B.C.).

An account of this genesis of wan-ko and a later development of these two songs is quoted in Yüeh-fu shih-chi:

> Ts'ui Pao in Ku chin chu says: "'Hsieh lu' and 'Hao-li' were together a mourning song [sang-ko 喪歌]. It was originally composed by the followers of T'ien Hêng. Hêng committed suicide. His followers mourned for his death and composed a lament for him. The song spoke of the ephemerality of man's life, like dew [lu] on the garlic-leaf [hsieh], which dried up and perished easily. It also said that when a man died, his spirit would return to Hao-li [Mountain]. By the times of Emperor Wu of Han, Li Yen-nien divided it into two songs. 'Hsieh lu' was used in the funerals of princes and lords while 'Hao-li' was used in the funerals of gentlemen and the common people. As the songs were sung by the pallbearers, they were also called 'pallbearer's songs' [wan-ko]."[10]
>
> 崔豹古今注曰：「薤露，蒿里並喪歌也。本出田橫門人，橫自殺，門人傷之，為作悲歌。言人命奄忽如薤之露，易晞滅也。亦謂人死，魂魄歸於蒿里。至漢武帝時，李延年分為二曲，薤露送王公貴人，蒿里送士大夫庶人。使挽柩者歌之，亦謂之挽歌。」

If the account of Ts'ui Pao is true, the songs "Hsieh lu" and "Hao-li" should be the two stanzas of one song which was originally called "sang-ko" instead of "wan-ko."

At any rate, Ts'ui Pao's story concerning the genesis of wan-ko was obviously very popular during the Six Dynasties. Ch'iao Chou 譙周 (201-270), in his frequently

[10] Kuo Mao-ch'ien, p. 326.

cited book Fa hsün 法訓, gives a similar account of this genesis. He further remarks that the singing of wan-ko by T'ien Hêng's followers was without precedent as the pallbearers had used to bite a chip in their mouths to prevent themselves from making any noise and there had been no songs being sung in the funeral.[11]

There are critics who hold a different view on this matter. Tu Yü 杜預(222-284), for one, argues in his Annotations to Ch'un-ch'iu tso-shih chuan 春秋左氏傳 that sang-ko actually did not begin from "Hsieh lu" and "Hao-li" and that a sang-ko with the title "Yü pin 虞殯" was sung when Duke Ai of Lu 魯哀公 invaded Ch'i 齊 (484 B.C.).[12] His view is supported by Liu Hsiao-piao (459-521), though in a more scrupulous and reserved manner.[13]

The controversy on the genesis of wan-ko, in fact, is not so much aesthetic as historical in nature. A genre should be taken as a structural model which makes the writing of individual works possible. Therefore, it should be approached, as Guillén puts it, "from the perspective of the writer, as a 'traditional model or conventional

[11] See Ch'iao Chou, Fa hsün, in Vol. V of Ku chin shuo-pu ts'ung-shu 古今說部叢書, 1st ser., ed. Kuo-hsüeh fu-lun she 國學扶輪社 (Shanghai: Kuo-hsüeh fu-lun she, 1913), p. 1a; also Liu I-ch'ing, p. 186.

[12] Quoted in Kuo Mao-ch'ien, p. 326 and Liu I-ch'ing, p. 186. The historical event can be found in the eleventh year of Duke Ai 哀公十一年 in Tso chuan. But the song mentioned is no longer extant today.

[13] See Liu I-ch'ing, p. 186.

pattern' exerting an influence on the creation of a work in progress."[14] It is clear that songs of wan-ko were composed in the tradition of the two yüeh-fu poems,[15] as it was conventional for the poets to refer in their wan-ko poems the origin to "Hsieh lu" and "Hao-li." In one of the wan-ko poems of Lu Chi 陸機, the poet informs his listeners or readers of its genre by the line: "Listen to my song of 'Hsieh lu' 聽我薤露詩." Or in the final couplet of the wan-ko by the T'ang poet Mêng Yün-ch'ing 孟雲卿, it says: "The song of 'Hsieh lu' is like this: / Man's life is just like a sojourn 薤露歌若斯, 人生盡如寄." Approaching "from the perspective of the writer," we may take the songs "Hsieh lu" and "Hao-li" as the original models of the genre wan-ko.

The generic metalanguage of wan-ko we have so far discussed has left us no clue to the retrieval of the corpus of songs it subsumes. What we lack is supplemented by various anthologies, which, as we have said, are often the most fertile sources of deictic information. The most important collection of wan-ko poems is in Wên-hsüan 文選,

[14] Guillén, p. 73.

[15] It is a common practice for the literati from late Han times down to the modern period to write poems imitating anonymous folk songs collected by the Music Bureau (Yüeh-fu), although considerable deviations from their original models can be found. See Hans H. Frankel, "Yüeh-fǔ Poetry," in Studies in Chinese Literary Genres, ed. Cyril Birch (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974), pp. 98-104; also Liu Ta-chieh 劉大杰, Chung-kuo wên-hsüeh fa-chan shih 中國文學發展史 (Hong Kong: Hock Lum Co Ltd., 1979), I, 195-202, 225-26.

an anthology compiled by Hsiao T'ung 蕭統 (501-531). In his Anthology, there are totally five poems collected under the heading of "Wan-ko." One of them is ascribed to Miao Hsi 繆襲 (T. Hsi-po 熙伯 , 186-245), three to Lu Chi (T. Shih-hêng 士衡 , 261-303) and one to T'ao Ch'ien 陶潛 (T. Yüan-ming 淵明 , 365-427).[16] This collection of wan-ko, although incomplete, is important because it serves to form and delimit a representative corpus of the genre as it was regarded by Hsiao T'ung, a contemporary of the wan-ko poets. The list of wan-ko does not only substantiate the discursive existence of the genre by assuring its particular instances, but also bears significant implications to its historical development.

The collection of wan-ko in Wên-hsüan, as we have just mentioned, by no means exhausts all the songs that have been written in that genre, and is thus far from circumscribing the temporal limits of the genre wan-ko. However, judging from the flourishing times of the three wan-ko writers listed by Hsiao T'ung, we may well assume that the genre enjoyed a flowering period among the intelligentsia during the third and fourth centuries--especially during the Chin Dynasty (265-419), when the genre can be said to have reached its highest popularity.

[16] Two other wan-ko poems of T'ao Ch'ien are collected in Yüeh-fu shih-chi; see Kuo Mao-ch'ien, p. 330. Cf. T'ao Ch'ien, Ching-chieh hsien-shêng chi 靖節先生集 , ed. T'ao Shu 陶澍 , SPPY (rpt. Taipei: Chung-hua 中華書局 , 1966), 4/17b-18a.

And this period falls in with the times of Yüan Shan-sung and his contemporary ming-shih who engaged in the convention of the singing of wan-ko.[17]

The vogue for wan-ko seems to remain in full swing during the Southern Dynasties (420-589). Two wan-ko poems of this period are preserved in Yüeh-fu shih-chi of Kuo Mao-ch'ien (12th century).[18] One of them is ascribed to Pao Chao 鮑照 (d. 466?) and the other to Tsu Hsiao-cheng 祖孝徵 (6th century). Moreover, some eminent personalities are recorded to have practised the singing of wan-ko. Yen Yen-chih 顏延之 (384-456), for one, is described as an uninhibited person who "always went into the wineshop, [drinking] naked and [singing] wan-ko."[19] And according to another anecdote, Hsieh Chi-ch'ing 謝幾卿 and Yü Chung-jung 庾仲容, two eminent officials in the Southern Courts, often sang wan-ko songs together,

[17] Although the dates of birth and decease of Chang Chan are not known, he should be a contemporary of Huan Ch'ung (328-389). A record of their meeting is quoted above, p. 25. Huan I is mentioned as "a man of Chin (Chin jên 晉人)" in various books; for example, see the Annotations of T'ao Shu to T'ao Ch'ien, 4/18b. Cf. Wu Jung-kuang 吳榮光, ed., Li-tai ming-jên nien-p'u 歷代名人年譜, KHCPTS, 362 (Taipei: Shang-wu, 1968).

[18] In Yüeh-fu shih-chi, there is a collection of several poems written by poets of the Six Dynasties under the titles "Hsieh lu" and "Hao-li," but it is obvious that their form and contents tend not to classify them into the category of wan-ko. Generally speaking, these poems express the poet's aspiration for politics by citing famous historical figures and events. See Kuo Mao-ch'ien, pp. 327-28.

[19] 顏延之不能取容當世。宋文帝傳詔召之，頴不肯詣，常日但入酒店，裸袒攜歌，了不應對。 Ho Liang-chün, 25/10a.

keeping the beat with bells, when they were drunk in the country.[20]

In the T'ang Dynasty, the form of wan-ko was still occasionally taken up by poets such as Chao Wei-ming 趙微明, Yü Hao 于鵠, Mêng Yün-ch'ing and Po Chü-i 白居易, and their wan-ko poems are collected in Yüeh-fu shih-chi. However, like other yüeh-fu imitations by T'ang poets, their wan-ko poems deviate a lot from their original models, both in contents and structure. Hence, the wan-ko poems of T'ang at most represent a late flowering of the genre.[21]

The genre text of wan-ko which is made up by the generic metalanguage of the Six Dynasties shows that the existence of the genre was a socio-historical reality in these cataclysmic epochs. Songs of wan-ko were composed by poets, sung by the ming-shih, recorded down and talked about by critics and enjoyed by the public. In short, the genre became a part of their literary competence and a characteristic feature of their culture. It was articulated and recognized as a challenge to their times--as wan-ko.

[20] 謝長史,庾友並既克官,二人志意相得,並肆情誕縱,或乘露車歷遊郊野,既醉,則相與飛鐸挽歌,不屑物議 Ho Liang-chün, 25/11b.

[21] In a T'ang short story "Li Wa chuan 李娃傳" by Po Hsing-chien 白行簡, there is a vivid description of a wan-ko singing contest between the protagonist and another wan-ko singer. While the protagonist sings "Hsieh lu," his opponent sings a wan-ko with the title "Pai-ma 白馬." See Wang P'i-chiang 汪辟疆, ed., T'ang-jên hsiao-shuo 唐人小說 (Hong Kong: Chung-hua, 1958), pp. 102-03.

CHAPTER TWO

FROM SANG-KO TO WAN-KO: SOME PRAGMATIC CONSIDERATIONS

It is always said that traditional Chinese literary criticism was loaded with pragmatic concerns, or that, more specifically, literature was regarded by ancient Chinese critics as something great and everlasting because it had significant political, social, moral and educational influences on kings, princes, society or the whole nation.[1] Confucius said, "Words communicate, and that's all 辭達而已矣。"[2] To speak in words, or to write in verse, is to perform an act of communication. And this act of communication is important because the message conveyed can carry with it the intended effect of the speaker or the writer. Wang Ch'ung 王充 (27-ca. 101) made it more explicit to say that the writing of literary men was "to encourage good and admonish evil."[3] In short, it was a conviction of the ancient Chinese critics that

[1] For a detailed discussion of the pragmaticism in traditional Chinese criticism, see James J. Y. Liu, Chinese Theories of Literature (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1975), pp. 106-16.

[2] Analects (Lun-yü 論語), SSCCS, vol. 8 (rpt. Taipei: I-wên 藝文出版社, 1965), XV, 41.

[3] 然則文人之筆，勸善懲惡矣。Wang Ch'ung, "Lun-hêng i-wên pien 論衡佚文篇," in Kuo Shao-yü, I, 72.

language discourse, literature in particular, should have beneficial influence on the audience.

By "pragmatic" criticism of Chinese literature, we refer to nothing more than the study of the practical functions of literature in general, which should not be confused with the modern western concept of "pragmatics" that studies "the relationship between text structure on the one hand and the structure of context and felicity conditions for speech acts on the other hand."[4] For those western speech act theoreticians, to speak or to make an utterance is to perform an act (of communication). There are three types of speech acts, viz. locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act. A locutionary act is the act of producing an utterance which follows the grammatical structure in a given language. Through the use of words, the speaker also performs an illocutionary act, expressing a certain kind of intention or trying to elicit a certain kind of reaction, such as warning, promising, asking questions and so forth. Finally, the speaker who performs a locutionary act and an illocutionary act may also be performing a perlocutionary act which attempts to achieve certain intended effects in his listener. But to be correctly performed, a speech act must

[4] Teun A. van Dijk, "Pragmatics and Poetics," in Pragmatics of Language and Literature, ed. Teun A. van Dijk, North-Holland Studies in Theoretical Poetics, 2 (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1976), p. 23.

also observe a specific set of appropriateness or felicity conditions with respect to a given context. These conditions form part of the linguistic competence of both the speaker and the listener because they represent the rules which users of a language assume to be in force in a particular context of verbal communication. Moreover, they also determine the relationship between the text and the context in a speech act.

Although it is obvious that the pragmaticism in traditional Chinese criticism is completely distinct from the pragmatics of speech acts, the study of the practical usefulness of the literary text in society inevitably draws our attention to the relationship between the writer and the reader through the text. For example, in Wang Ch'ung's statement that the writing of literary men is "to encourage good and admonish evil," it implies that the illocutionary force of literary writing is "encouraging" (good) and "admonishing" (evil). It also suggests implicitly that the intended effects (perlocutionary force) of the writer on the reader are that the reader may follow what is good and discard what is evil after the act of (literary) communication. The objectives and methodology of Chinese pragmatic criticism and western pragmatics are different, yet their focuses of attention are similar. Hence we find that the speech act theory can be applied fruitfully to the studies of Chinese literary genres, in which traditional emphasis

has been laid on the practicality of a given genre.[5]

In Wên-hsin tiao-lung, which had been regarded as the most important critical work and the most complete study on genres in the history of Chinese literature, at least thirteen of the twenty genres[6] defined by Liu Hsieh (ca. 465-522) can be said to be genres of poetry and artistic prose established for specific practical purposes. Consequently, description of pragmatic rules forms an essential part of his definition of various genres. The genre ai 哀, for instance, is defined explicitly as an illocutionary act of mourning (without tears) with the intended effect (perlocutionary act) of moving the hearer or the reader into tears. It is further and more completely defined by a set of appropriateness conditions. An ai-tz'u 哀辭 presupposes that someone has met a premature death and that the dead person was known to the speaker of the poem (usually his relative). Hence the feeling of the speaker should be grievous and he wants to express his love and regret for the dead person. Since the person died young, the speaker should praise no more than his intelligence and cleverness and must

[5] See Hsü Fu-kuan, pp. 16-17.

[6] There has been much controversy on the actual number of genres discussed in Wên-hsin tiao-lung. For the sake of convenience, we make it twenty in accordance with the number of chapters devoted to the definition of genres.

mourn only for the loss of his physical form.[7] From this example, we can see how a traditional definition of a Chinese literary genre can be adapted to a definition in terms of its illocutionary and perlocutionary acts and a set of appropriateness conditions.

Where wan-ko is concerned, we are no longer in such a convenient position as we are when discussing the genre ai. In Wên-hsin tiao-lung, the genre wan-ko is only briefly mentioned in the category of yüeh-fu.[8] Neither a systematic study on wan-ko nor a list of its appropriateness conditions is available. But as it is, a speech act theory of wan-ko constructed from the genre text that we have been piecing together will be more realistic. We may begin our construction with the two folk songs "Hsieh lu" and "Hao-li" which, as we have shown, can be taken as the original models of the genre wan-ko. For the sake of convenience in discussion, we shall call the two songs by their original name sang-ko in distinction from the wan-ko of the literati.

"Hsieh lu" and "Hao-li," as we have learnt earlier, are assumed to be composed by the followers of T'ien Hêng on the occasion of his suicide. This piece of

7 心辞远哀，盖不测之悼，故不在黄发，此致文旨。----原夫亲辞大体，情主于痛伤，而辞窮乎变惋，幼未成德，故誉止于察惠；弱不胜務，故悼加乎膚色，…必使情往会悲，文来引泣，乃其贵耳。
Fan Wên-lan 范文瀾, ed., Wên-hsin tiao-lung chu 文心雕龍注 (Peking, 1962; rpt. Taipei: Ming-lun 明倫出版社, 1975), pp. 239-40.

8 至於蚌伎鼓吹，漢室鏡掖；亦戎表殊事，而並從八采府，縣襲所致，亦有可算焉。
Fan Wên-lan, p. 103.

information, although valuable for a study of the genesis of the sang-ko, does not interest us here for several reasons. Firstly, the truth of this account is doubtful. Secondly, it does not tell us the conditions under which the two songs were composed. And the most important of all is that there is no direct reference to it in the performance of wan-ko songs.

The first kind of pragmatic rule defines the mode of transmission which is proper for the sang-ko. According to Roman Jakobson, there are six constituent factors which make up any speech event, viz. addresser, addressee, context, contact, message and code.[9] Since "message" and "code" do not bear any direct relation to the pragmatic level of our generic study, we may ignore them for the time being and concentrate ourselves on the other four factors.

The rules concerning the context and contact of the sang-ko can be immediately specified following the account in Ku chin chu. The two songs "Hsieh lu" and "Hao-li" should be performed in funerals to send off the spirit of the dead. As the texts of the two songs have existed before the actual performance, the singers rely on their memorized texts when they are singing the songs orally in funerals. Moreover, musical instruments such as bells and drums are used to accompany the singing.

[9] Roman Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistic and Poetics," in Style in Language, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960), p. 353.

It is also obvious that the addresser of the sang-ko must be the pallbearer who, while pulling the hearse to the burying ground of the dead person, sings the songs in the funeral. However, the identity of the addressee raises a special problem which is in fact a characteristic feature of the sang-ko. Since the sang-ko is sung to send the spirit off, it should formally be addressed to the dead person or his spirit. Thus the relation between the addresser and the addressee creates a rather awkward situation because they belong to two different worlds. The dead person obviously cannot hear nor understand the singing of the pallbearers, who must suppose or pretend that he can although they themselves may not believe it. They should also realize that their singing is constantly "overheard" by the group of mourners in the funeral procession, the friends and relatives of the dead person, who are there to accompany the hearse to the grave. Therefore, in the act of the performance of the sang-ko, the addressee and the listener do not have the same identity. The relation between the addresser and the listener can also be specified further by the fact that the presence of the pallbearers and their authority to perform the singing act of the sang-ko are requested and probably paid for by the mourners. Looking at it in this perspective, the relationship between the addresser and the listener can be described as employee and employer.

The relation between the addresser and the addressee

and that between the addresser and the listener certainly have strong implications to the illocutionary force of the singing act, or what the singers are trying to accomplish by performing the act. According to John Searle, illocutionary acts can be classified into five basic categories: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations.[10] On the macro-level, the sang-ko should be related to the expressive illocutionary act of lamenting since the two songs "Hsieh lu" and "Hao-li" were originally composed as a lament for the dead, as the name "sang-ko" may suggest. However, once the sang-ko has become the "pallbearer's songs" in funeral and "institutionalized," it ceases to express the true psychological state of the speaker.[11] The facts that the pallbearers sing from a fixed memorized text and that they are asked to sing for the dead person make the lamenting expression fictional in nature. In other words, they perform the songs in the funeral as they are but do not actually feel the grief of the loss.

Judging from the texts of the two songs, we can see more clearly that the illocutionary force of the sang-ko is not expressive at all. In the song "Hsieh lu," the

[10] Quoted in Marie Louise Pratt, Towards a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1977), p. 86.

[11] See Ryan (1979), 316.

speaker only asserts or describes "the ephemerality of man's life" and the eternity of death.

Dew on the Garlic-leaf[12]

Dew on the garlic-leaf,[13]
How swiftly it dries.
The dew dries and will fall again tomorrow;
A man dies and is once gone--when will he return?[14]

薤露

薤上露，
何易晞。
露晞明朝更復落，
人死一去何時歸。

As for the song "Hao-li," it only tells us that every man dies and his spirit returns to Hao-li Mountain.

Hao-li

What man's land is Hao-li?
It gathers spirits, neither wise nor foolish.
Lord of Ghosts, why are you hastening us so?
Man's life cannot linger for one more moment.[15]

[12] For the sake of clarity, all the translations of Chinese poems in this thesis are based on the principle of paraphrasing, keeping the original structure as far as possible.

[13] In Ku chin chu, the line is quoted as "Morning dew on the garlic-leaf (Hsieh shang chao-lu 薤上朝露)." See Ts'ui Pao, Ku chin chu, in Vol. IX of Ku chin i-shih 古今逸史 (rpt. Taipei: Shang-wu, 1969), B.2.350.

[14] Cf. Arthur Waley, trans., Chinese Poems (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1946), pp. 55-56; J. D. Frodsham and Cheng Hsi, eds., An Anthology of Chinese Verse: Han, Wei, Chin and the Northern and Southern Dynasties (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 2.

[15] Cf. Waley, p. 56; Frodsham, p. 2.

蒿里

蒿里誰家地，
聚斂魂魄無賢愚。
鬼伯一何相催促，
人命不得少踟躕。

Although the two songs are sad and mournful in tune, they do not actually express the feeling of the speaker. The texts only represent the states of life and death as they are considered by the composer of the songs. Thus the performance of the sang-ko should be taken as a representative illocutionary act.

The singing of the sang-ko on the whole does not direct the addressee or the listener to do anything. Nevertheless, certain intended effects concerning its perlocutionary act can be specified. First of all, the sang-ko performance is intended to invoke a feeling of grief and mourning in the funeral procession, which is appropriate for the occasion. And if the singers are considered to be employed in the funeral, this intended effect should be fulfilled, ideally, to the satisfaction of the mourners. Besides, by singing what the songs say, the singers are able to make the mourners remind themselves of their own mortality, that they are bound to the same fate which has befallen on the one they are now mourning for. Looking at the sang-ko in the light of its perlocutionary force, we may say that it is intended to be

"overheard" by the listener in a pretence of addressing to the addressee.

In order to carry out the performance of the sang-ko correctly, the pallbearers must observe a specific set of appropriateness or felicity conditions. As for the mourners, they must assume these conditions to be in force if they are to participate in the speech act. The appropriateness conditions listed below refer to the addresser's knowledge, beliefs and assumptions with respect to the addressee.

1. As the addresser sings the sang-ko legitimately only in a funeral, the act of his performance presupposes that someone has died and that the death must be a human one.

2. The addresser knows that "Hsieh lu," according to Ku chin chu, is appropriate for the funeral of a prince or a lord while "Hao-li" should be sung on the death of a gentleman or a commoner.

3. The addresser openly addresses the sang-ko to a dead person, who cannot hear nor understand the message transmitted through the act of singing. The addresser is obviously aware of this fact.

4. However, the addresser either believes that the spirit of the dead is listening or pretends that it is listening.

5. The addresser may or may not believe that the statements made in the sang-ko represent the true states of life and death.

The pragmatic rules listed above are clearly oriented towards the relation between the addresser and the addressee. Conditions (1) to (3) refer to the knowledge of the addresser and conditions (4) and (5) represent his beliefs or assumptions. Under condition (1), the performance of the sang-ko is appropriate only in a funeral. If no one has died and someone sings the sang-ko--- as Yüan Shan-sung and his followers did---his behaviour would be regarded as wild and unruly. And under condition (2), the pallbearers must know which sang-ko they should sing in a funeral. If the wrong sang-ko is sung, it would be inappropriate or an insult to the dead. Conditions (3) and (4) suggest a contradiction between the addresser's knowledge and his belief (or pretence). Finally, condition (5) can be taken as the sincerity condition of the singing act of the sang-ko.

As we have mentioned, the addresser also realizes that his singing is constantly overheard by the mourners in the funeral procession. Consequently, there are appropriateness conditions which govern the relation between the addresser and the listener.

1'. The addresser is requested and paid by the listener to perform the sang-ko in the funeral.

2'. The listener has already been familiar with the song that the addresser is going to sing and is expecting it to be sung.

3'. The addresser either intends or expects his singing to be sad and mournful to the listener as it would

be appropriate for the occasion of mourning.

4' The addresser either intends or expects that his sang-ko has the effect of a warning of man's mortality on the listener.

Among these four pragmatic rules listed above, conditions (1') and (2') constitute the cooperation principle between the addresser and the listener while conditions (3') and (4') refer to the effects that the singing act may have on the listener.

These two sets of appropriateness conditions, which specify the relations of the addresser to the addressee and to the listener, are in fact interrelated to each other through the ritual origin of the singing of the sang-ko in the funeral. The participants of the singing act must play their respective roles assigned to them by traditional conventions. While the pallbearers sing the sang-ko in the form of a lament, the mourners are expected to respond emotively to the song. And what is more, the interrelationships between the two sets of pragmatic rules make the performance of the sang-ko become a fictional discourse. According to Ryan,

> fictional discourse is produced when the speaker merely pretends to accomplish speech acts, and so does in an overt manner, without intention of deceiving anybody. Making a fictional assertion would for instance mean that the sender does not commit himself to the truth of the statement, as he would when making a serious assertion.[16]

[16] Ryan (1979), 317-18.

When the pallbearers address themselves to the dead person who cannot hear nor understand their singing, they are merely pretending to accomplish speech acts. Certainly, they are not trying to deceive anybody as their performance is requested by the mourners. The assertions they make in the singing of the sang-ko have already been familiar to the mourners and, therefore, whether they are true or not is not important to the singing act. In other words, since the texts of the sang-ko are fixed and commonly known, the pallbearers do not have to commit themselves to the truth of the statement. The knowledge, beliefs and intentions represented in the sang-ko are not assigned to the singers themselves, "but to a double of his person, speaking in a different world."[17]

Richard Ohmann, in his definition of literature, claims that "the suspension of normal illocutionary forces tends to shift a reader's attention to the locutionary acts themselves and to their perlocutionary effects."[18] In the performance of the sang-ko, the suspension of the representative illocutionary force tends to shift the attention primarily to the perlocutionary effects that the singing act may achieve. In addition, the attention is also focused on the

[17] Ryan (1979), 318.

[18] Richard Ohmann, "Speech Acts and the Definition of Literature," Philosophy and Rhetoric, 4 (1971), 17.

locutionary acts of singing and orchestration in the performance. On the other hand, the "literariness" of the text that Ohmann's statement refers to is not taken into much consideration in the singing of the sang-ko, especially when the texts of "Hsieh lu" and "Hao-li" are fixed and well known by all the participants in the funeral. In fact, the language of the two songs, like that of most yüeh-fu poems, is simple, direct and colloquial. It is not until they are "imitated" in the wan-ko of the literati that "literariness" is brought into the foreground.

It is, of course, always dangerous to presuppose a dichotomy between "literary" and "non-literary" discourse. For there seems to be no way of defining literature from nonliterature. Yet there are theorists who have attempted to demarcate the scope of literary competence and one of the theories proposed takes "literariness" as écart or departure from the norm of "ordinary language." But this concept has been objected on the ground that the norm it refers to is of fictitious nature and cannot be rigorously defined. There is nothing which can be called an absolute norm of non-literary texts. Nevertheless, the concepts of norm and écart may fruitfully be applied to the studies of genres.

First of all, as Todorov has shown, the traditional dichotomy between literary and non-literary discourse should be replaced by a "typology of the various types

of discourse."[19] In other words, what we have are types of texts which are literary in degree. Now a genre, as it is conceived by Guillén, is "a group of works that fluctuate around a norm with respect to each of certain characteristics."[20] Every genre embodies a norm which consists of sets of various generic requirements. Two genres may share some common requirements, or they may differ from each other by the departure of one norm from the other.

The concept of écart or departure from the norm is especially helpful in accounting for the "difficulty [that] besets the study of genres,"

> one which has to do with the specific character of every esthetic norm. The major work creates, in a sense, a new genre and at the same time transgresses the previously valid rules of the genre....One might say that every great book establishes the existence of two genres, the reality of two norms: that of the genre it transgresses, which dominated the preceding literature, and that of the genre it creates.[21]

The "difficulty" that Todorov refers to may be re-formulated into the statement that every new genre is created by a departure from its original norm. This departure is sometimes intentional in order to create a new genre, but it may also be necessitated by a change

[19] Quoted in Ryan (1979), 311.

[20] Guillén, p. 74.

[21] Tzvetan Todorov, The Poetics of Prose, trans. Richard Howard (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977), p. 43.

in context. From the sang-ko of "Hsieh lu" and "Hao-li" to the wan-ko of the literati, we can see how the "men of letters" adapt their original models to a new context.

Before we return to our study of wan-ko, let's first have a look at Ohmann's attempt to define literature as "quasi-speech-acts":

> A literary work is a discourse whose sentences lack the illocutionary forces that would normally attach to them. Its illocutionary force is mimetic. By "mimetic" I mean purportedly imitative. Specifically, a literary work purportedly imitates (or reports) a series of speech acts, which in fact have no other existence. By so doing, it leads the reader to imagine a speaker, a situation, a set of ancillary events, and so on.[22]

Ohmann's definition of literature, without doubt, offers us an illuminating description of the pseudo-illocutionary acts demonstrated in literary works, but it fails as a definition of literature in the fact that mimetic illocutionary force is not a distinguishing feature of literature. Despite this fact, Ohmann's mimetic theory can be taken to explain the imitative act of wan-ko. It is not at all incidental that Burton Watson calls the yüeh-fu poems of the literati "pseudo-folk songs," for "it was very common for writers of later ages to compose imitations of the Han folk songs."[23] Where wan-ko is concerned, its illocutionary force is mimetic as its

[22] Ohmann, 14. For a discussion of his definition of literature, see Pratt, pp. 89-99.

[23] Burton Watson, Chinese Lyricism (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 52-55.

writers "purportedly imitate" their sang-ko models.

Unlike "Hsieh lu" and "Hao-li," wan-ko is not intended to be performed in funerals. Nor is it necessary for wan-ko songs to be sung orally. We believe that most of the wan-ko poems composed by the men of letters in the Six Dynasties were in written texts, although some of them were intended to be sung. In fact, according to the anecdotes which describe the behaviours of the "famous gentlemen" of that time, the singing of wan-ko songs was their habitual activity at parties or drinking bouts.[24] References to "drinking wine" can actually be found in some of the wan-ko poems themselves.[25] But the relation between drinking and the singing of wan-ko would be difficult to understand without a study of the semantic (referential) aspects of the genre.[26]

Wan-ko poems are obviously fictional in nature. They are intentional imitations of a context and a series of speech acts, "which in fact have no other existence." The context of the "fictional" possible world is imaginary: the speaker (writer) invites the hearer (reader) to imagine himself to be in a funeral while they

[24] See above pp. 23, 25, 30-31; also Watson, p. 49.

[25] Examples can be found in the first and second wan-ko poems of T'ao Ch'ien.

[26] "Such problem [concerning the speech act status of literary utterances] cannot be studied, however, in isolation from specific semantic (referential) aspects of literary discourse, e.g. the relations between 'actual' and 'fictional' possible worlds." Dijk, p. 25.

are probably drinking at a party. The construction of this imaginary context makes the pseudo-speech act appropriate, and the hearer can be reminded of the conventional themes that life is short and that death is inevitable. But the act of singing wan-ko in drinking bouts cannot be explained simply by the term "thanatophobia."[27] There is a closer, metaphysical link between the "actual" and the "fictional" worlds. Drinking, for the literati of the Six Dynasties at least, represents the intellectual's hedonistic escapism in the face of immense death and the ephemerality of life. Drinking is a way of forgetting one's worldly self, and funeral is the ceremony of leaving one's earthly home forever. Drinking is a pleasure, but the pleasure resembles the pain of death. This dualism, which Tökei calls the "elegiac nature of the entire Chinese poetry,"[28] often finds its expressions in the drinking poems of that times.[29] Hence it is no accident that wan-ko should be sung on drinking occasions.

There is no question that the hearer (reader) realizes that the addresser of a wan-ko song is the writer or the singer of the song, who is a living person.

[27] See Watson, p. 49.

[28] Tökei, p. 28.

[29] One of the most outstanding and well-known examples is the first couplet of Ts'ao Ts'ao 曹操 "Tuan-ko hsing 短歌行": "One should sing when facing the wine, / For how many years of life does one have? 对酒当歌，人生幾何?"

On the other hand, the speech act is pretended to be done by a dead person, who laments for his own death. The problem concerning the status of the addresser of wan-ko may be solved by a distinction between macro-speech acts and micro-speech acts. In brief, macro-speech acts determine the whole discourse while micro-speech acts merely characterize the individual sentences of the discourse.[30] On the macro-level, the addresser of wan-ko is the writer-singer; on the micro-level, he is the represented narrator, the dead person in the funeral. The reader or the hearer may regard that the discourse is false or fictional in the factual world and that the writer-singer is pretending or imitating. But the discourse should be regarded as true in the alternative and imaginary world in which the sentences are necessarily and appropriately uttered by a dead person.[31] In most cases, the represented narrator in a wan-ko song is not identical with the writer-singer who performs the singing or the writing act. Therefore, the indexical expressions used in the text, such as "I," "here" and "now," do not refer to the writer-singer, but to the represented narrator. However, the reader or the hearer should accept as a rule that the writer-singer has direct access to the mental states of the represented narrator so that all

[30] See Dijk, pp. 36-37.

[31] See Dijk, pp. 47-48.

propositions of the text are true in the fictional world.[32]

When the sang-ko is performed in a funeral, the pallbearers address the song to the dead person and there is also an explicit and definite group of listeners, viz. the mourners. In contrast, the addressee or the hearer of wan-ko is implicit and indefinite, as in most literary works. The poet can only assume the existence of a fictitious hearer who "overhears" his song and who has an adequate knowledge of the norm so that the world he constructs can be reconstructed and is significant. In some cases, as when a wan-ko song is sung before a group of listeners in a drinking bout, the singer can be more certain of the identity and the knowledge of the "overhearer" so that the success of the singing act may be more or less guaranteed. In fact, the listeners are contemporaries and friends of the singer and to a certain extent they are bound to the same sociocultural and psychological conditions. Hence, although the act of singing wan-ko at drinking bouts in the Six Dynasties might seem strange and unruly to the readers of later ages, it was appropriate for the occasion at that time.

What is more important for the appropriateness of the singing of wan-ko is the cooperation principle assumed to be in force between the singer and the hearer.

[32] See Dijk, pp. 52-54.

In order to be cooperative, the hearer must understand what the singer is trying to accomplish by singing wan-ko. In an above-cited anecdote,[33] we know that Huan Ch'ung is only jesting with Chang Chan because we believe that he is familiar with the wan-ko tradition and is only intentionally uncooperative. In other words, he purportedly misunderstands a pseudo-speech act by "projecting" it into the context of the factual world.

A wan-ko song is a "mimetic" lament. It does not carry the normal illocutionary force attached to lamenting. The singing of wan-ko is not an act of expressing the psychological states of the singer or of a dead person. Instead, on a higher level, the illocutionary force of the singing act is representative: by imitating a lament or pretending to be lamenting, the poet is able to assert his philosophy of life and death and to make his judgement on the world's business. Inasmuch as this second-order illocutionary force is concerned, the singing act should be taken as a serious discourse because it generally represents the true opinion of the poet. Although the world that the poet creates is fictional or imaginary, and the illocutionary act of lamenting is merely "on exhibit," the attention of the hearer or the reader is drawn to the message itself, which is all the more easily reconstructed in the pseudo- and traditional context.

[33] See above, p. 25.

Therefore, the statements made in a wan-ko song and the world it creates are conceivable at once as the understanding of the hearer is facilitated by the well-known themes of the sang-ko.

Moreover, the fact that wan-ko is an imitation of the sang-ko has another advantage of helping the poet to achieve his perlocutionary effects. According to the appropriateness conditions (3') and (4') of the sang-ko, the listener is expected to be sad and mournful and to take the song as a warning of man's mortality. Now the hearer of wan-ko is also intended to respond to the singing act in much the same way as if he were a mourner in a funeral. He must not take a rational stand to criticize the irrational elements in the song (he should not ask, for example, "You are not a follower of T'ien Hông, why then are you grief-stricken to this extreme?"). On the contrary, he must respond to it as emotively as possible in order to be moved to tears---if he is drunk, so much the better. Although we have stated that a wan-ko song is also intended to be a warning, the warning should be conducted through sentiment, through tears, as the overall orientation of the song is towards "pleasure"--- it is, after all, an entertainment for drinking. Finally, as Ohmann has claimed, by the suspension of the normal illocutionary force and by the realization of the emotive potential of the singing act, the hearer (reader) is able to shift his attention to the locutionary act itself so that both the semantic aspects and the verbal properties

of the song are brought into the foreground.

In spite of all these similarities we have found between the speech acts of the sang-ko and wan-ko, we insist that the genre wan-ko should be strictly distinguished from its original models, "Hsieh lu" and "Hao-li." It is obvious that wan-ko songs are imitations of the norm set up by the sang-ko; however, significant generic deviances make them a new genre. This departure from the norm can be brought to light by examining the appropriateness conditions under which the sang-ko and wan-ko are performed.

Among all the pragmatic rules we have specified for the sang-ko, some of them are either "inappropriate" or "non-appropriate"[34] for the performance of wan-ko. In the first place, the singing of wan-ko does not presuppose that someone has died, although the addresser would like the listener to imagine himself to be in a funeral. Thus, appropriateness condition (1) is inappropriate and conditions (2) and (4) are non-appropriate for the singing act of wan-ko. Condition (3), which specifies the addresser's knowledge of the addressee, is again non-appropriate as the addressee of a wan-ko song is usually undefined. Since the writer or the singer usually believes that his wan-ko song

[34] Here we call a condition "inappropriate" if the fulfillment of the condition implies a violation of the pragmatic rules governing the performance of a speech act. But if its fulfillment is only unnecessary or not required, the condition is named "non-appropriate."

represents the true states of life and death, condition (5) is inappropriate. Where the relations between the addresser and the listener are concerned, it goes without saying that condition (1') is inappropriate while condition (2') is non-appropriate in the case of wan-ko. The wan-ko song that the singer sings may or may not have been familiar to the listener. On the other hand, conditions (3') and (4') should be regarded as equally appropriate for the singing of wan-ko.

In Ohmann's attempt to define literature, he finds that all the appropriateness conditions outlined by J. L. Austin for illocutionary acts are transgressed in works of literature because literary utterances are "quasi-speech-acts." In our study of the evolution from the sang-ko to wan-ko, it seems that we have proved a case in which a genre can be created and defined by its transgressions of the appropriateness conditions of the original norm it "imitates." The main difference which marks the failure and success of the two cases respectively is that while we cannot have a real and unified norm for all non-literary utterances, every genre constitutes a norm which is at once real and unified in itself.

Specifically, a new genre may find its reality of existence by imitating, retaining and transgressing the generic rules which specify its original norm. In the genre wan-ko, the writer imitates his sang-ko models in

such a way that the previously valid rules concerning the addresser's knowledge, beliefs and situation are transgressed or modified to define a new context system while the intended effects are preserved.

The set of appropriateness conditions for the genre wan-ko may include the following statements:

1. The writer/singer intends the reader/hearer to imagine himself to be in a funeral;

2. The writer/singer pretends that he is a dead person;[35]

3. The reader/hearer should believe that the song is sung by a dead person or his spirit;

4. The reader/hearer should respond emotively and be sad and mournful;

5. The writer/singer intends the song to be taken as a warning of man's mortality;

6. The writer/singer believes that the song represents the true states of life and death.

From the last pragmatic rule, it is clear that the genre wan-ko should be taken as a serious representative illocutionary act on a higher level. At the same time, the first three conditions are necessary for the cooperation between the singer and the hearer in the performance of wan-ko songs because the genre is

[35] The first of the wan-ko poems written by Lu Chi and some of those by the T'ang poets present a special problem here as they are written in the perspective of a friend or relative of the dead person. Either we take these songs as a stylistic variant of the genre or we make conditions (2) and (3) "optional."

basically a fictional imitation of the funeral tradition of the sang-ko. As we have discussed earlier, the singing act of the sang-ko ensures that both the pallbearers and the mourners are bound to their assigned roles in funeral rites. On the other hand, the fictional world created by wan-ko is conceivable only through the imagination of the singer and the hearer so that an imaginary funeral can be performed, say, at a drinking bout.

Finally, the intended perlocutionary effects of wan-ko are stated in conditions (4) and (5). Obviously, condition (4) is entirely justified and consistent as wan-ko is a lyric (shih 詩) genre, and it is significant that it has been put traditionally under the larger category of yüeh-fu. But the fact that a wan-ko song should be intended to serve as a warning makes the genre "didactic" or "practical" in nature. Insomuch as this character of wan-ko is concerned, Tökei has a rather ingenious observation in his study of Liu Hsieh's genre theory:

> ...the shih allows considerably more speculative elements or if you like, didactics than our genre of songs. This speculative, "meditative" character...is synonymous with the elegiac keynote of Chinese lyrics in a wider sense of the word. Strictly speaking, this meditative-elegic character naturally means a certain indirectness in expressing emotions, that is to say principally a certain alienation from the par excellence lyric principle of a direct expression of emotions... in Chinese poetry such a separation of "emotion" and "thought" is impossible. Needless to say, the same point is attested by the dual

and yet unified sense of the term chih [志].[36]

In our opinion, this "meditative-elegic character" of Chinese lyrics is manifested most intensively in the genre wan-ko.

A wan-ko song is a philosophical discourse in the disguise of a lament. In this respect, wan-ko songs are very similiar to the "great" elegies in English literature as they are defined by Donald C. Mell: they "are always poems taking the death of an individual to investigate philosophical topics."[37] Yet we feel very reluctant to translate "wan-ko" into "elegy." Apart from the explanation that we gave in the "Introduction," our reasons are quite obvious. Firstly, the definition of the term "elegy" is too wide-ranging and not precise enough for the genre wan-ko.[38] And what is more, most of

[36] Tōkei, pp. 110-11. The word "chih" has been interpreted in many different ways throughout the history of Chinese criticism. "Chih," which etymologically means "what stays in the heart," has been taken as "intention," "sentiment," "emotion," "record," etc. See Chu Tzu-ch'ing 朱自清, Shih-yen chih pien 詩言志辨 (rpt. Hong Kong: Chien-wen 建文出版社, 1960), pp. 1-4. Cf. James J. Y. Liu, pp. 67-70; Chow Tse-tsung, pp. 155-66.

[37] See Donald C. Mell, A Poetics of Augustan Elegy: Studies of Poems by Dryden, Pope, Prior, Swift, Gray, and Johnson (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi N. V., 1974), p. 9.

[38] For example, one of the definitions of "elegy" is: "A lyric, usually formal in tone and diction, suggested either by the death of an actual person or by the poet's contemplation of the tragic aspects of life." Alex Preminger et al., eds., Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, enl. ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1974), p. 215. Cf. Cecil Maurice Bowra, Heroic Poetry (London: The Macmillan Press, 1952), pp. 8-10; Ruth Wallerstein, Studies in Seventeen-Century Poetics (Wisconsin: The Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1950), p. 5.

the pragmatic rules specifying how wan-ko songs should be used in communication cannot be applied to the genre of elegies. Therefore, we should be satisfied with the original generic label "wan-ko" as it is.

CHAPTER THREE

MAN IN TIME:
THEMES OF WAN-KO

"Poetry verbalizes the will (shih yen chih 詩言志)." This statement on the nature of poetry, found in the chapter "Yü shu 虞書 " of the Book of Documents (Shu-ching 書經 or Shang-shu 尚書),[1] has claimed its authority in the Chinese literary thought since the ancient times. No matter how the term "chih" is interpreted, it is always important for critics to know what the poet is trying to express in his poem. For those traditional Chinese critics who stress the practical uses or functions of literature, speculation on the "themes" of literary texts is often their prime concern. In some cases, literary criticism tends to aim at finding out the hidden allegorical meaning of a given text. But most often the traditional focus of attention is directed to a description of the theme. To speak is to perform an act, but if the act is to be meaningful and beneficial, it must have virtuous "contents." Now it should be clear that the term "theme" is used by those critics to indicate the "propositional content" of the

[1] K'ung Ying-ta 孔穎達, Shang-shu cheng-i 尚書正義, SPPY (rpt. Taipei: Chung-hua, 1966), 1/18a.

text, or the semantic (referential) aspect of the message.

While pragmatics generally deals with the relations of the text to the speaker and to the listener, semantics takes the text as its object of study. According to Todorov, two major types of relations are to be found in the literary text: relations between copresent elements, *in praesentia*, and relations between elements present and absent, *in absentia*.

> The relations *in absentia* are relations of meaning and of symbolization. A certain signifier *signifies* a certain signified, a certain phenomenon *evokes* another, a certain episode *symbolizes* an idea, another *illustrates* a psychology. The relations *in praesentia* are relations of configuration, of construction.... Linguistics deals with syntagmatic relations (*in praesentia*) and paradigmatic relations (*in absentia*), or with *syntax* and *semantics*.[2]

In Todorov's scheme, semantics is the study of paradigmatic relations, or relations *in absentia*, which take the forms of signification, evocation, symbolization and illustration. In a word, it is the study of the relations of meaning. The "themes" of a text, therefore, can be defined as the ideas or concepts which the text means or signifies. And all the themes of a text together constitutes its world of meaning.

In a genre, certain themes can always be found shared

[2] Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction to Poetics*, trans. Richard Howard (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1981), pp. 13-14.

by the texts that belong to that same genre. Thus, the themes of a genre should be viewed as constraints on the semantic representation of the texts of the genre. All these thematic constraints specify the "macro-structure" of texts, defined by van Dijk as "global semantic representation" or "logical form" of texts.[3] Looking at the theme in this perspective, we can observe that it has structural as well as referential functions. Poetic composition by themes has definitely played a significant role in Chinese poetry. "Analysis of recurring elements [themes in particular] in different forms on the same subject," as Peter H. Lee has said, "may help to identify a poem as belonging to a certain kind, and not to some other."[4] In the Chinese poetic tradition, where singing performance is often as important as written composition, a certain group of themes is always used in a particular genre, and "originality" does not matter so much as the association of conventional ideas or images.[5] Hence, the themes of a genre can be taken as subject

[3] Quoted in Ryan (1979), 321.

[4] Peter H. Lee, Celebration of Continuity (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1979), p. 1.

[5] The use of themes in the poetry of Shih-ching 詩經 is more than obvious. It leads Granet to the assumption that "the poems of Shih Ching contain no element of personal feeling." Marcel Granet, Festivals and Songs of Ancient China, trans. E. D. Edwards (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1932), pp. 84-86. This feature can also be observed easily in the yüeh-fu poetry, which is believed to have originally belonged to the oral tradition. See Frankel, pp. 77-104.

units or groups of ideas or images regularly employed in the texts of the genre in the formation of its semantic structure.

The identification of the themes, therefore, is always indispensable in the definition of a genre. But it is also necessary to note that the theme must not be studied on its own. While theorists have warned against the many possible pitfalls in thematic studies, the most prominent danger to be avoided is to reduce literature to pure content. Although the discrepancy between form and content in the poetic style of some periods often worried the traditional Chinese critics, who always maintained "the principle of the priority of contents," most of them would agree that literature should seize the unity of content and form to achieve the "harmony" and the "balance."[6] "Poetry verbalizes the will." Hence words and the propositional content should form a harmonious unity. Furthermore, the form of a genre depends not only on its verbal properties, but also on its context system. Without the consideration of the context system, it would be impossible to provide a theoretical and historical link between the generic form and the contents of its individual works. The structuralists claim that literary texts should be taken

[6] The whole Chinese aesthetics, according to Tökei, manifests a search for the harmonious unity of "the virtuous contents and the suitably fine form." See Tökei, pp. 15-16.

as phenomena which manifest the abstract systems of their genres. Therefore, the properties that the individual works of a genre manifest must conform to the laws that govern their relations to one another.[7] It is then essential to observe that there must be necessary and not arbitrary relations between the themes of a genre and the rules which specify its pragmatic and syntactic features.

Now that we have had a brief review of the concept of "themes" in generic studies, we can begin our exploration of the themes of wan-ko. First of all, we should again have a look at the song "Hsieh lu," which we have considered to be the original model of wan-ko.

Dew on the Garlic-leaf

Dew on the garlic-leaf,
How swiftly it dries.
The dew dries and will fall again tomorrow;
A man dies and is once gone---when will he return?

In his explanation of the title "Hsieh lu," Kuo Mao-ch'ien quotes from Ku chin chu saying that the theme of the song is "the ephemerality of man's life." There is no doubt that this theme is clearly expressed in the comparison between the dew and man's life in the first two lines. Man's life is just like a dewdrop on the garlic-leaf, which dries up and perishes easily. The brevity of man's life is reflected in the fall and evaporation of the dew.

[7] Todorov (1975), pp. 21-22.

But as the comparison is stretched and looked at in another perspective in the last two lines, the nature of the dew and that of man's life are no longer similar but actually in contrast with each other. The fall and evaporation of the dew form an eternal cycle of nature: it perishes and revives every day. On the other hand, after a man has died, he will never retrieve his life. Hence the theme of "the eternity of death," contrary to and juxtaposed with "the ephemerality of man's life," is evoked in the contrast. The two themes are complementary. In the face of the eternity of death, life seems to pass away in a moment. Conversely, since man's life is so short and so vulnerable, the immutable fate of man is all the more painful and, in a sense, "tragic."

We can say that after all the song represents nothing more than man's "primitive" reflection on the dualism of life and death. Its use of comparison and contrast is direct and unsophisticated. It is lyrical in nature and can be defined as, if you like, "a pure cri de coeur."[8] In fact, the song typifies what Shih-hsiang Chen has said to be "the most striking quality of Chinese literature," which is "the combination or fusion of technical niceties, high sophistication and refinement of sensibilities with keen, direct, simple, and perhaps sometimes naive observations of man and nature."[9] It can

[8] See C. Day-Lewis, The Lyric Impulse (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965), pp. 3-5.

[9] Chen Shih-hsiang, "The Shih-ching: Its Generic Significance in Chinese L[illegible]rary History and Poetics," BIHP, 34, pt. 1 (1969), [illegible] 13; rpt. in Birch, p. 8.

be seen clearly that the themes of the song are based just on such "naive observations of man and nature." But naive as they are, the two themes can be blended together and associated with one of the most haunting motif in literature: man in time.

Time, whatever a concept it is, abstract or concrete, is usually accepted as an objective order of things in the life of an ordinary man. The shift of day and night, the change of seasons and the succession of years: all these temporal phenomena which constantly flow in a steady stream are quite outside his ordinary self. Time concerns him only in knowing when it is right or proper for various kinds of work in agricultural activities. It seldom or never touches him as something fatal, something personal--something that involves his own destiny. But when it does, he always finds himself face to face with some drastic change in life or in human history. He becomes a "poet" when he realizes that time and man are one. Such an extraordinary experience, which often gives birth to lyrical flight, is in fact not exceptionally unusual. There are moments in the life of everybody when the <u>being</u> of time seems so disquieting and is <u>felt</u> poignantly in a subjective manner.

We can agree with the forceful argument of Shih-hsiang Chen that "not until the advent of the poetry of Ch'ü Yuan [屈原]" did time become "a generalized notion, as a pure, abstract and integrated conceptual

entity" in "its rightful name": shih 時.[10] But we certainly cannot accept that it is "Ch'ü Yuan's poetic discovery" that time is felt with all affective subjectivity in poetry.[11] In the poetry of Shih-ching, it is true that time has not acquired a unified and abstract meaning, and it is always conceived in its more concrete representations as the day, the seasons and the year. But time, as a vague concept, is frequently referred to through these specific divisions of time in a subjective, personal manner. As it is felt by a young man in love, time is all but an objective, steady flow. In poem 72, for instance, the lover would sing with all his affection and anguish:

> One day without seeing her
> Seems like three autumns.
>
> 一日不見，
> 如三秋兮。

Similarly, in poem 124, the woman mourning for her beloved husband at the graveyard finds herself hopelessly entangled in the cruel, incessant flow of time, despite her wish to join her husband again in death. The last two stanzas of the song run as follows:

[10] Shih-hsiang Chen, "The Genesis of Poetic Time: The Greatness of Ch'ü Yuan, Studied with a New Critical Approach," CHHP, No. 10 (1973), pp. 6, 39.

[11] Shih-hsiang Chen (1973), pp. 5, 24.

Summer days, winter nights,
After a hundred years,
I'll return to his dwelling.

Winter nights, summer days,
After a hundred years,
I'll return to his room.

夏之日，冬之夜，
百岁之後，
歸於其居。

冬之夜，夏之日，
百岁之後，
歸於其室。

For the poetess who has been deprived of her love, every day is a summer day, long and tedious, and every night a winter night, cold and lonely. Life is nothing but a long waiting for death. These two stanzas sound similar to the lines from the poem "Délie", by the 16th-century French poet Maurice Scève (ca. 1500-1564), quoted by Shih-hsiang Chen as an example of the motif of "man in time":

> Every day, every hour, thus without ceasing,
> I must finish my life and recommence. In this
> uselessly alive.[12]

What we really want to say is that the awareness of "man in time" is not so much a "poetic discovery" as a basic mental concern which stirs man's heart at some

[12] Shih-hsiang Chen (1973), pp. 3-4.

particular moments.

One of such moments, naturally, is in a funeral, when a man finds himself face to face with the immense presence of death and its all-destructive power. Death, especially that of a beloved one, always provides a chance for those who are "still alive" to reflect on the nature of time and existence. Death, however natural it should be, is every man's business. On such an occasion, time can no longer maintain its steady, objective status; it seems to flow away so swiftly, without tarrying. It is all too natural that we find in the song "Hsieh lu" the theme of "the ephemerality of life" standing out so overwhelmingly against the background of "the eternity of death." Time, like the eternal natural cycle of the dew, turning round and round, takes on its fatal meaning in death, the conqueror of all men. And man is left to wrestle hopelessly against his ephemeral existence.

The poignant feeling of man in time and its consequent belief of the brevity of life are not the privilege of some individual poets. They are frequently the reflections of the mass consciousness in some epochs of upheaval, when social and political changes are quick and common.

> At certain junctures in human history, during those epochs most often remembered as cataclysmic, there would appear in poetry and philosophic or religious literature a new disquieting consciousness of time and existence. There we find that time is felt

most acutely and treated in the most affective state of mind.[13]

The elegies of Ch'ü Yuan, in which his sorrow and anguish are captured in the disquieting passage of time and the turbulent state of existence, may represent the political anarchy of the Ch'un-ch'iu 春秋 (Spring and Autumn) and Chan-kuo 戰國 (Warring States) periods (722-221 B.C.). Then the next long cataclysmic period we find in the history of China is generally known as the Six Dynasties (220-589). In fact, during the later half of the Eastern Han (25-220), the Empire had already been wrecked by continual political disorders: the corruption and weakening of the central government, the usurpation of power, political massacres and wars filled the history of the times. For more than three centuries that followed, the whole country was pulled deeper into the mire of political changes.

Since the Chieh-an 建安 period (196-220), the common people had seen the rise and fall of successive dynasties, but it was they who suffered most. Military conscription and the exactions of rapacious officials inflicted more hardships upon them than they could bear. Then there were wars, famines and plagues, which were so common that they had become an indispensable part of their normal life. As for the literati, they were often caught in the political crossfire and became victims of

[13] Shih-hsiang Chen (1973), p. 3.

politics. To escape was as difficult as to set the world in order again. The best advice for them was to get drunk and let the world go to hell.

During these epochs of upheaval, time seemed to have run out of its place. The bewilderment and pain caused by the state of existence led one to despair. Time and existence, which Ch'ü Yuan had desperately tried to get hold of, found their voice once again in the poetic temperament of the age. The "Nineteen Old Poems (Ku-shih shih-chiu shou 古詩十九首)," anonymous poems believed to be written by the literati during the late Eastern Han,[14] can be taken as examples of this literary tendency. The significance of this group of poems in the evolution of the Chinese poetic forms has been much talked about by a number of critics. What particularly interests us here is that these poems "are dominated by a tone of brooding melancholy" focusing on the motif of "man in time." As Watson has said, "We are not told who the people of the poems are nor, in most cases, what particular grievances beset them; we know only that, as men, they are all victims of the passing of time, the changeability of fortune, and the dire inevitability of death."[15]

The following lines from poem 13 can tell us

[14] See Liu Ta-chieh, pp. 202-10. Cf. Yeh Ch'ing-ping 葉慶炳, Chung-kuo wên-hsüeh-shih 中國文學史 (Taipei: n.p., 1966), pp. 68-70.

[15] Watson, p. 30.

something about how the conventional motif of time and existence appears in these anonymous poems:

> In infinite space the seasons shift,[16]
> But the years of life are like morning dew.
> Man's life is as brief as a sojourn;
> His years lack the firmness of metal and stone.[17]

> 浩 浩 陰 陽 移，
> 年 命 如 朝 露，
> 人 生 忽 如 寄；
> 壽 無 金 石 固。

These lines follow the description of a graveyard scene which begins the poem. It is probable that the simile of life as the "morning dew" is taken from the sang-ko "Hsieh lu" although there is no direct evidence to support this. Obviously, the use of the image of "morning dew" had become a conventional way of suggesting the theme of "the ephemerality of life" in the Eastern Han.

In the above poem, we can also find another metaphor which is frequently used by the poets of the "Nineteen Old Poems" in expressing the brevity of life. It is the comparison of man's life to "sojourn (chi 寄)."

[16] The traditional dichotomy between yin 陰 and yang 陽 shows the dualism of complementary concepts. While yin means femininity, passivity, darkness, etc., yang means masculinity, activity, brightness, etc. In this poem, yang should be taken as spring and summer and yin autumn and winter. Generally speaking, the term "yin yang" here refers to the change of seasons, viz. time.

[17] Cf. Waley, p. 62; Watson, p. 29.

Here are two other examples from these poems:

> Man lives between heaven and earth,
> And rushes past as a traveller on a long journey.[18]
>
> (poem 3)

人生天地間，
忽如遠行客。

> Man's life sojourns for a single lifetime,
> And vanishes suddenly like a swirl of dust.[19]
>
> (poem 4)

人生寄一世，
奄忽若飄塵。

According to Li Shan's 李善 annotations to the "Nineteen Old Poems" in Wên-hsüan, the chapter "Lao-lai Tzu 老萊子" of Shih Tzu 尸子 has this to say, "Man lives between heaven and earth; [his life] is a sojourn. One who is sojourning will certainly return (kuei 歸) 人生於天地之間，寄也。寄者固歸。" Li Shan also quotes from Lieh Tzu 列子 which says that "as a dead man is a man who returns, a living man is a traveller 死人為歸人，則生人為行人。"[20] This belief concerning the nature of life and death and the dual concepts of "chi" and "kuei"

[18] Cf. Waley, p. 57; Watson, p. 24.

[19] Cf. Waley, p. 58; Watson, p. 24.

[20] See Hsiao T'ung, ed., Wên-hsüan (rpt. Taipei: Wên-hua 文化圖書公司, 1979), p. 401.

offer an explanation as to why people at that time considered life to be a brief journey. First of all, there is the traditional dichotomy between the spirit (hun 魂) and the body (hsing 形). The body is merely a temporary house for the spirit to lodge in. When a man dies, his spirit must leave his body and return to the eternal nature. In other words, man is only a traveller sojourning in this mundane world, not a permanent resident.

On the other hand, the word "kuei," which literally means "to return," is a paradox in itself. Since the permanent home of man is death or nature, to die is to return home.[21] But death also means leaving one's relatives, friends and earthly home. When a man has died, he will never "come back" to the world again. Thus, as in "Hsieh lu," the mourners often lament for the departure of the dead person and for the fact that he can never come back. The paradoxical term "kuei," therefore, may refer to journeys of opposite directions. For example, in the following lines of poem 14:

> I want to go home, to my native village;
> I want to return, but there's no road back.[22]
>
> 思還故里閭，
> 欲歸道無因。

[21] Explanation of the character "kuei" as "to die" can be found in various ancient philological and critical works. 呂氏春秋順說求人篇注故曰：歸，終也，終亦死也。說苑反質篇楊王孫曰：且乎死者，終生之化而物之歸者。爾雅：鬼之為言歸也。

[22] Cf. Waley, p. 62.

the word "kuei" may mean that the poet is longing "to go back" home. However, since the couplet follows a long description of the graveyard scene, the word "kuei" may also suggest the poet's death wish: he is tired of life's journey and wants "to return" to the eternal nature. After all, the dilemma implied by the word suggests that life is an illusion created by the state of existence. In his own fancy man often chooses to forget the transient nature of life and to consider the mundane world his permanent home.

We have mentioned that the "Nineteen Old Poems" are dominated by "a tone of brooding melancholy." Obviously, this prevailing mood is a result of the poet's contemplation of the various sad aspects of time and existence. It is really a chiché to say that life is brief and death is eternal. But if we consider the sociopolitical circumstances in which these poems were written, we will never fail to notice a ring of philosophy in them. No matter how proverbial the philosophy of life these poets express is, and if there is such a thing as the philosophy of life, this should be what it is: life is brief and death is eternal.

Theoretically and historically, it seems quite inevitable that these two contrasting themes are to be found in wan-ko poems, which enjoyed its popularity for the first time during the Wei and Chin periods and which, as we have previously explained, is a philosophical discourse in the disguise of a lament.

Since the Ts'ao family usurped the throne from the Han and founded the Wei, the Chinese Empire remained for a long period of time in a state of wars and disunion. The conflicts and intrigues which closely followed the struggles for political power claimed the lives of many literary men. Faced with all the quick and sudden changes in society and the hazards to their own lives, the literati could not help but feel the existential sorrow of "man in time" and were forced to contemplate the significance of life and the nature of existence. Consequently, they found their own philosophy of life which might help them out of their impasse. As we shall explain later, they also got its form of expression from wan-ko, originally performed in the funeral.

There can be no doubt that a generic form, while enhancing the expression of the propositional content, nonetheless imposes constraints on the semantic representation. It must be understood that the genre wan-ko means songs to be performed by the pallbearers in the funeral. As this generic form is taken up by the men of letters, the funeral they create in their poems is fictional or imaginary. A wan-ko song is, conventionally, a lament for the dead, but the act of lamenting should be considered to be a formal semantic element of the genre. Consequently, the wan-ko poems can hardly be called lyrical, and they actually tend to be didactic in tone. The fact that wan-ko are funeral songs enables the poet to carry out in his poem an

investigation into the philosophical issue of life and death.

We should note that "Hsieh lu," being an original model of wan-ko poems, has considerable influence on the thematic structure of the genre. In fact, the generic form itself suggests the themes of the sang-ko: the ephemerality of life and the eternity of death. But in wan-ko poems, these two themes are more often indirectly implied than explicitly stated. This can be observed in the beginning lines of the wan-ko poem of Miao Hsi, which is the earliest wan-ko extant today.

> When I was alive, I sojourned in the capital;
> As I am dead, I was left in the wide fields.
> At dawn I set off from the high hall;
> At dusk I lodged beneath the Yellow Springs.[23]
> The white sun sinks into the Gulf of Yü,[24]
> With its chariot hung up and steeds resting.
> Although the Heaven is wise and mighty,
> How can my life be restored to me?[25]
>
> 生時遊國都，
> 死沒葬中野。
> 朝發高堂上，

[23] According to the Book of Changes (I-ching 易經), the colour of heaven is black and the colour of earth is yellow. Then the springs are under the earth. Hence the term "Yellow Springs (Huang-ch'üan 黃泉)" refers to Hell, or Hades.

[24] In Chinese mythology, the Gulf of Yü (Yü-yüan 虞淵) is the place where the sun sinks down. See Wang Hsiao-lien 王孝廉, Chung-kuo ti shên-hua yü ch'üan-shuo 中國的神話與傳說 (Taipei: Lin King 聯經書局, 1977), pp. 17, 113-16.

[25] Cf. Waley, p. 82; Watson, p. 49; Frodsham, p. 78.

暮宿于弱水下。
自日入虞淵，
懸車息駟馬。
造化甚神明，
安能復存我。

In an analysis of Li Sao 離騷, Shih-hsiang Chen remarks that the structure of this long poem by Ch'ü Yuan is

> all motion and dynamism, characteristic of time which is conceived as all mobility and change. Most notable also is that there is seldom any fixed point of time in the poem. For no sooner is morning spoken than it is evening; no sooner days than they become months; and spring is followed by autumn in one breath of the sentence. All such words as morning and evening, chao hsi 朝夕, day and month, jih yüeh 日月, spring and autumn, ch'un ch'iu 春秋, year and the count of age, nien ssu [sic] 年歲, are oftenest paired off in a couplet or a single sentence.[26]

What Shih-hsiang Chen describes as "characteristic of time" in Li Sao can also be found in the lines we have just quoted from Miao Hsi, and in almost all the other wan-ko poems. Actually, the use of antithetical pairs of words, such as chao hsi and jih yüeh, is a regular feature in the versification of Chinese poetry as early as Shih-ching. Especially since the T'ang Dynasty, antithesis has become a formal element in Regulated

[26] Shih-hsiang Chen (1973), p. 39.

Verse (lü shih 律詩).[27] But it is also not to be denied that the use of antithetical expressions of time can bring out the "mobility and change" of the flow of time. In the wan-ko of Miao Hsi, the reader or the listener can easily feel the swift passage of time and the brevity of life in the uses of antithesis in the first two couplets. Life is suddenly taken over by death, and dawn soon plunges into dusk.

The motion of time is also suggested by the change in space, more specifically, by the contrast between the capital and the wide fields and that between the high hall and the Yellow Springs. Similar antitheses of the earthly home to the burial ground are also used in other wan-ko poems to suggest the temporal change from life to death:

> In the past I slept in the high hall;
> Now I lodge in the country of wild grasses.
> (T'ao Ch'ien, 3)
>
> 昔在高堂寢，
> 今宿荒草鄉。
>
> In the past I lived in the house of people;
> Now I dwell in the neighbourhood of ghosts.
> (Lu Chi, 2)
>
> 昔居四民宅，
> 今託萬鬼鄰。

[27] James J. Y. Liu, The Art of Chinese Poetry (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 146-50.

To be properly understood, these couplets require the reader not only to follow the temporal relationship of one line to the other, but also to perceive the juxtaposed spatial elements in the two lines simultaneously. Perceiving at the same moment the antithetical spatial terms of "the high hall" and "the country of wild grasses," or "the house of people" and "the neighbourhood of ghosts," the reader may feel the sudden and momentary change from life to death, which in turn enhances the feeling of the ephemerality of life.

In fact, it is a characteristic of Chinese poetry that time is often expressed by spatial relationship.[28] In the "T'ien-wên hsün" of Huai-nan Tzu 淮南子天文訓, the times of a day are distinguished by the positions of the sun.[29] Similarly, man's life is sometimes symbolized by the journey of the sun in a day. We can observe in the couplet of Miao Hsi's wan-ko that the sinking of the sun into the Gulf of Yü actually embodies the death of a man. Accordingly, the whole life of a man can be said to be as short and ephemeral as the journey of the sun in

[28] See David Hawkes, "Quest of the Goddess," in Birch, pp. 49, 62-63.

[29] 日出于湯谷，浴于咸陽，拂于扶桑，是謂晨明，登于扶桑，是謂朏明，…至于悲泉，爰息其馬，是為懸車，至于虞淵，是謂黃昏，至于蒙谷，是謂定昏。

one day.

Every evening the sun sinks down in the west and takes a rest after a day's journey, and it will surely rises up again the next morning. But when a man has died and finished his life's journey, no matter how wise and mighty the Heaven is, he will never come back to life again. For him, it is perpetual darkness, an eternal night, and morning will never come to him again.

> How void and deep the wide night is;
> The great dusk will never turn to morning.
> The time will come for a traveller to go back home;
> The year of my return will never come once I was gone.
>
> (Ju Chi, 2)

> 廣宵何寥廓，
> 大暮安可晨，
> 人往有返歲，
> 我行無歸年。

In the first two lines, we see that night is used as a symbol of death. This is in accordance with the belief of the ancient Chinese people who thought that the hell was at the same place as where the sun set , and it was the place where the sun never shone in.[30]

> Once the dark chamber has been sealed,
> For a thousand years there will not be dawn again.
>
> (T'ao Ch'ien, 1)

[30] See Wang Hsiao-lien, pp. 17, 114-17.

幽室一已閉，
千年不復朝。

Whether it is a dark chamber sealed forever or a perpetual wide night, the common theme for both T'ao Ch'ien and Lu Chi is that death is eternal.

In the genre wan-ko, the theme of the eternity of death is also frequently embodied by a journey without return. In contrast with man's life which is said to be a brief sojourn, death is a journey to man's final and permanent dwelling place. We have seen examples of this metaphor in the wan-ko poems of Miao Hsi and Lu Chi. Here are some other examples, and the last two are taken from the wan-ko poems of the T'ang poets Chao Wei-ming and Mêng Yün-ch'ing:

> Once I went out of door and was gone,
> I will never again return.[31]
>
> (T'ao Ch'ien, 3)

一朝出門去，
歸來良未失。

> In the world men grieve sadly at parting,
> But this is the place for parting eternally.
>
> (Chao Wei-ming)

人間痛傷別，
此是長別処。

[31] In Yüeh-fu shih-chi, "kuei-lai 歸來 (to return)" is substituted by "Kuei-chia 歸家 (to return home)." And in some texts, the character "liang 良 (very, extremely)" is replaced by "yeh 夜 (night)." See Wang Shu-min 王叔岷, T'ao Yüan-ming shih-chien chêng-kao 陶淵明詩箋證稿 (Taipei: I-wen, 1975), p. 501.

The road to Pei-mêng is not long;[32]
But this parting is the end of heaven and earth.
(Mêng Yü-ch'ing)

北邙路非遠，
此別終天地。

All the above examples show that death is a parting from one's earthly home for a journey to eternal death. Again, we can observe the paradox: death is a journey without return (to the world) because it is a journey to return (to eternity).

Apart from the theme of the eternity of death, the association between death and a journey without return is closely related to the funeral origin of wan-ko. As the name "pallbearer's songs" suggests, wan-ko are songs supposed to be sung by the pallbearers in the funeral. Although the wan-ko poems of the literati are not intended to be performed in the funeral, they are imitations of the funeral songs and are therefore governed by the context of their original models. Hence, the wan-ko poets always invite their readers or listeners to imagine themselves to be in a funeral at the very beginning of their poems. And they usually do this by giving a description of the funeral. The funeral description, which constitutes a theme of the genre wan-

[32] Pei-mêng 北邙 is the name of a mountain in the Honan province. In the ancient times, people of the upper class were often buried there.

ko, plays a significant role in the construction of the context structure. It seems to be indispensable to the creation of the fictional world. We shall return to this point in deatils in the next chapter. At any rate, the imaginary funeral suggests that the dead person, who is often the narrator of the wan-ko poem, is on his way to the burial ground. This journey is certainly different from all the other journeys in the world as it is the final journey of man. Thus the theme of the eternity of death is frequently associated with a journey on which the traveller parts from his friends and relatives forever and will never come back.

Obviously, the description of the funeral may vary in length and in elaboration, depending on the individual style of the poet. For instance, in Lu Chi's wan-ko poems, the poet dwells on his funeral description with all the banners, embroideries, chariot, horses, procession, drinking and weeping. Such an elaborated description undoubtedly adds both colours and sound to the poem and, what is more, gives the poet a chance to demonstrate his poetic resources and his talent for artistic description--contrary to the simplicity and directness of its folk models.

In most of the other wan-ko poems, however, the description of the funeral is often plain and direct, without dwelling on the details. One particular example is the wan-ko of T'ao Ch'ien. In the concluding lines of his first wan-ko poem, the poet says:

Those who came to see me off
Have all returned to their homes.
My kin may have some lingering grief,
And the others have sung their songs.
But where is the one who has died?
His body is left to merge with the round of the hill.[33]

向来相送人，
各以歸其家。
親戚或餘悲，
他人亦已歌，
死去何所道，
託体同山阿。

We can see that in the first four lines when the poet speaks of the funeral, his tune is plain and formal, without any artistic elaboration. But it is also obvious that there is a philosophical ring in his lines. According to the poet, or the narrator, death is inevitable and a matter of fact. Therefore, all the funeral rites and the grief of the mourners are nothing more than formalities. They are unnatural because, as the last two lines suggest, the body of a man is just a dwelling place for his spirit during his sojourn in the mundane world. Once his life is over, the body must return to nature. So death is inevitable because it is a natural process.

[33] Cf. Watson, p. 50; James Robert Hightower, The Poetry of T'ao Ch'ien (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 248.

Actually, it is not difficult to see the Taoist influence in the wan-ko poems of T'ao Ch'ien. Although he is often said to be a purifier of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism,[34] it is the writings of Chuang Tzu 莊子 which have the greatest influence on his poetry. In many of his poems, we can find allusions to Chuang Tzu's philosophy. For example, in the second of his wan-ko poems, he remarks:

> When there is life there must be death;
> To die early is not short-lived.
>
> 有生必有死，
> 早終非命促。

The second line of this couplet should be interpreted in this way: since life is brief and death is inevitable, there is no absolute standard for measuring a man's life-span. The thought expressed by these two lines reflects just Chuang Tzu's principle of "treating things as equal (ch'i wu 齊物)." On the one hand, T'ao Ch'ien's Taoistic orientation makes his wan-ko poems plain and direct in expression. On the other hand, they become different from those of his predecessors and earlier folk models as they are explication of the philosophical system of Chuang Tzu.

[34] See Liu Ta-chieh, pp. 273-78; Yeh Ch'ing-ping, p. 114.

T'ao Ch'ien's admiration for Chuang Tzu and the Taoist philosophy can be explained by his enthusiastic search for freedom, equality and Nature in an age of upheaval. Certainly, this kind of aspiration was not at all peculiar or unusual to his contemporaries. It is known that during the Eastern Han Confucianism, which had enjoyed orthodoxy for a long time since the beginning of the Han Dynasty, began to decline. At the same time, Taoism was becoming more and more popular and it became a vogue during the Wei and Chin periods.[35] Naturally, as in the case with T'ao Ch'ien, we may expect Taoism had its influence on the rise of the genre wan-ko in the Six Dynasties.

> The popularity of such [wan-ko] poems no doubt owed something to the vogue for Taoism, particularly the writings of Chuang Tzu, which often linger over the ugly and grotesque side of existence in order to free the reader from his bondage to the conventional concepts of joy and sorrow, life and death, and make him see that one is just as desirable as another.[36]

The account of Watson has told only part of the story; for we have to ask why there was such a demand for the intellectuals to free themselves from the "bondage to the conventional concepts of joy and sorrow, life and

[35] See Liu Ta-chieh, pp. 228-31.

[36] Watson, p. 51.

death," etc.

We have already had a brief review of the political and social conditions in the Six Dynasties. In a word, the political instability and social disorders, the uncertainties of official life and the peril of life involved in politics forced men of intelligence and learning to retreat from the state affairs. "Escapism" may be a term for the intellectual thought of their times, even though it seems to be generally too ambiguous for describing their psychological complex. For most of these people, it was difficult to get themselves entirely free from their political aspiration, and there could be little or no chance of keeping themselves aloof from the social ills which hung over the whole country. Nevertheless, some people would try to escape from the unpleasant reality by seeking immortality through the use of elixirs, medicines or occult practices. If a man could really become an immortal, he might thus be free from all the ills and sorrow of the mortal world. But for most intellectuals, all they could hope for was to get drunk all the time and forget completely all the worldly matters. Wine, as T'ao Ch'ien properly called it, was "the thing for forgetting sorrow (wang-yu wu 忘憂物)." At that time, it was not too difficult for a gentleman to become known for alcoholism. The most complete form of escapism, it seemed, was to seek refuge and consolation in the Taoist teachings so that one could attain spiritual detachment from his emotional bondage.

According to Chuang Tzu, all the differences we perceive with our body and mind, such as joy and sorrow, longevity and dying young, cleverness and stupidity, are all artificial and unnatural. If man wants to be free, he must transcend these differences and return to his true self in Nature. Hence, we can understand why the genre wan-ko had such a great appeal to the intellectuals in the Six Dynasties. In a wan-ko poem, the poet may experience death by imagining himself to be a dead man in his funeral. It is through death that man can realize that the body is corruptible, and that everything which is associated with his body is transient, including fame, wealth, officialdom and sorrow. Death is inevitable because it is natural and it is in death that man can really give up his body, empty his mind and return to Nature. Although the vogue for the genre wan-ko may suggest that the poets are "gripped by thanatophobia, the morbid fear of death," we can see that what actually motivates the writing of wan-ko should be the desire to transcend both life and death. All the descriptions of "the inevitability of death" and "the corruptibility of the body," which constitute two indispensable themes for the genre, are not intended to show that death is horrible or sad, but they only tell us "the transiency of the mundane world."

The theme of "the inevitability of death" is in fact the main theme of the sang-ko "Hao-li."

Hao-li

What man's land is Hao-li?
It gathers spirits, neither wise nor foolish.
Lord of Ghosts, why are you hastening us so?
Man's life cannot linger for one more moment.

The second line of the song may be interpreted as saying that when a man has died and become a spirit, the spirit is neither wise nor foolish. But it can also mean that the fate of death will befall on all men, whether one is wise or foolish. A man must die when the day of his death comes even if he does not want to, and he cannot even put off his death for one moment. Of course, it always sounds somewhat fatalistic to say that man has no power or right to control his own fate and that he must surrender to his destiny. However, it is the common experience of all men that death is inevitable and man can do nothing about it.

The powerlessness of man to fight against death and destiny was especially keenly felt by the wan-ko poets, who had to see death and changes almost every day in their cataclysmic epochs. This situation of their times is best reflected by the following lines from the poem "Seven Sorrows (Ch'i-ai shih 七哀詩)" by Wang Ts'an 王粲:

Outside the gate I can see nothing
But white bones covering the broad plain.
出門無所見，
白骨蔽平原。

One might ask why death had taken so many and why

man could do nothing in the face of death, but he could never get an answer. All he knew was that if death had been so common, it should be natural for man to feel its pain and grief. As Lu Chi lamented in his introduction to his fu poem "Lamentation on Passing (T'an-shih fu 歎逝賦)":

> In the past I often heard my elders recounting their youthful days. Among their contemporary relatives and old friends, most had died and only few were still alive. I am fourty years old now. Most of my close relatives are dead and few alive. As for my bosom friends and close friends, less than half of them are left. There were those who once travelled on the same road and feasted in the same room with me, but for ten years, they have all passed away. I feel sad when I think of this, and you know how sad it should be.
>
> 昔每聞長老追討平生，同時親故或凋落已盡，或僅有存者，余年方四十，而親親戚屬，七多亡喪，眠交遊友，亦不半在，或所曾共遊一塗同宴一室，十年之外，凄然已盡，以是思哀哀可知矣。

If one really thinks of one's friends, with whom he was once feasting and drinking together, and who have died and are gone forever now, it may be quite natural for him to feel sad about the passing of time and the helplessness of man before the inevitability of death. In one of his wan-ko poems, speaking in the voice of a man mourning for his dead friend, Lu Chi writes:

> The body will easily pass away in death,
> But it is beyond my power to save thee.
> (Lu Chi, 1)

殉殁身易士，
孰子非所能。

From a historical point of view, it is most certain that death is inevitable when we look at all those heroes and eminent personalities who had to give themselves up to death eventually. Neither their courage nor wisdom could have saved them from their final destiny.

It has been so since the ancient times;
Who can escape death?
(Miao Hsi)

自古皆有然，
誰能離此者。

All the heroes have died,
Where are the other people?
(Pao Chao)

壯士皆死盡，
餘人安在哉。

Maybe T'ao Ch'ien was wise to accept death as a natural process: "When there is life there must be death." After all, the body which gives a man his existence is merely a lodging place for his life's sojourn. Death is inevitable because what belongs to Nature must return to Nature. The body is corruptible and not as firm as "metal and stone." This theme, the corruptibility of the body, plays a particularly important part in the semantic representation of the genre wan-ko. As we have expounded earlier, it constitutes a

thematic element which is indispensable to the logical representation of the philosophical issue that life is just a transient phenomenon. In the wan-ko poems, this theme is usually presented by a description of how the body decays and is eaten by worms and insects.

> My body and form are losing shape;
> Teeth and hair will soon fall away.
> (Miao Hsi)
>
> 形容稍歇減，
> 齒髮行當墮。

> My rich flesh is a feast for the ants;
> My beautiful body will be destroyed forever.
> (Lu Chi, 2)
>
> 豐肌饗蠭蟻，
> 妍骸永喪泯。

Such descriptions of the corruption of the body may create, as Watson puts it, a "gothic" effect. But it is obvious that these wan-ko poets do not really intend to dwell on details in order to be shocking. These descriptions are there in the poems because they represent a necessary thematic element of the philosophical discourse in the form of wan-ko.

However, in the wan-ko of Pao Chao, we find an example of how a poet can be obsessed with the ugly and the grotesque.

> The tomb door is still closed,
> But the white ants come in groups.

In life my body was clean and fragrant;
Now the small insects bring it disaster.
My dark hair-locks have fallen from their roots;
My skeleton is covered with green moss.

蜒門永復閉，
白蟻相將來，
生時芬蘭体，
小蟲今為災。
玄鬢永復根，
枯髏依青苔。

The description in Pao Chao's wan-ko presents an ugly and grotesque picture of what death is like. The loneliness of death, the fading of beauty and the worm-eaten body lead us to the themes: life is brief, the body is corruptible and, finally, fame and senses are transient.

Life is empty as all the things in this mundane world are transient: this is the most important message that the wan-ko poets want to convey to themselves and to their readers. We should remember that the popularity of the genre wan-ko in the Six Dynasties was at least partly a result of the escapism of the intellectuals in those chaotic epochs. The philosophy of life and death which the genre represented could provide them with an excuse for not doing or fulfilling what they were supposed to in their lives. This is nowhere better demonstrated than in the wan-ko of T'ao Ch'ien:

The vital breath of the spirit disperses;
The dead body remains in the empty coffin.
My young kids cry, wanting their father;
My good friends, touching my body, weep.

Gain or loss I'll not again perceive;
Right or wrong, how can I know?
Hundreds or thousands of years later,
Who'll know whether it's glory or disgrace?
All that I regret was when I was alive
Never had I drunk enough wine.[37]
(T'ao Ch'ien, 2)

魂氣散何之，
枯形寄空木。
嬌兒索父啼，
良友撫我哭。
得失不復知，
是非安能覺。
千秋萬歲後，
誰知榮與辱。
但恨在世時，
飲酒恒不足。

Gain or loss, right or wrong, glory or disgrace: all these differences make sense only to living men; they are meaningless for those who are dead. We, who are living and alive, may have sorrow and feel sad. Sometimes we cry and sometimes we weep. But a dead body knows or feels nothing of these. All we have to consider is the eternity of Nature and the eternal flow of time, then everything in this mundane world is transient and there is no difference between life and death. Life is "a

[37] Cf. Hightower (1970), p. 248.

tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing." Life is a dream dreamt by a drunkard.

This theme, that life is empty and everything in life is transient, is not to be found in the sang-ko models. Nevertheless, we can observe in the genre wan-ko a tendency of philosophization through T'ao Ch'ien to the T'ang poets. In the concluding lines of Tsu Hsiao-cheng's wan-ko poem, the poet says:

> Glory and prosperity, singing and laughing:
> Everything will eventually come to nothing.
> 榮華與歌笑，
> 萬事盡成空。

The theme is further elaborated and treated at length in the wan-ko of Yü Hao:

> Seeing that people's hearts are cut by grief,
> I think it's better to return to the hill.
> I'll not hear the noise of sad crying,
> But quietly settle in the embrace of Nature.
> When man's lifetime ends, he'll merge with things
> And be exempted from sorrow and distress.
> In the world few can have longevity,
> But all are upset by sorrow and pain.
> 見人切肺肝，
> 不如歸小好，
> 不聞哀哭聲，
> 默々安懷抱，
> 時盡從物化，
> 又免生憂擾，
> 世間壽者稀，
> 盡為悲傷惱

In these lines of the poem, we can hear the poet arguing why death should be preferred to life. The funeral is still in progress, but there is no more room for mourning.

For the wan-ko poets, who were born to live and to experience their chaotic epochs, time was not a mysterious order of things. Time was the force of all changes, and man was inside. The only way out was to live through death. For them, the genre wan-ko was a convenient form to experience life through death and thus gain a spiritual retreat from a world of misery. As they expressed themselves through the conventional form, they conformed to the old themes and, at the same time, created their new themes. Hence, wan-ko, being a genre, is the poet's total and unified experience of a conventional norm and individual creation.

CHAPTER FOUR

VERBAL PROPERTIES:
THE SYNTACTIC STRUCTURE OF WAN-KO

Among literary theorists, a widely-held view concerning the nature of literature stresses the difference between the language of literature and the language of other types of discourse. According to it, literary language, far from being transparent as scientific language is, is opaque and draws attention to itself through ambiguities and the use of all kinds of literary techniques. Certainly, this is not the same as saying that literature constitutes its own semiotic system of signs and that there is a strict dichotomy between literary and non-literary texts. It only points out the fact that the "literariness" of literature lies in its verbal properties, or the particular use of language in literature, more than in its other aspects.

Literature does not have its own medium of transmission other than the common language system. It goes without saying that the use of language is different in varied types of texts. From the language of a text, the reader is able to know to what type of discourse the text belongs. In the same way, he cannot understand a particular text until after he has realized how the language system functions in the type of discourse that

the text belongs to. In the definition of a genre, therefore, it is always necessary to include a set of generic rules which specify its verbal properties.

In our semantic study in chapter three, we discussed the relations *in absentia* between present elements and their absent counterparts of *wan-ko*. Now we are to deal with the relations *in praesentia* between copresent elements in the text so that the verbal properties of *wan-ko* can be fully recognized. First and foremost, we have to postulate that the relations between the elements or units of a text always manifest the textual structures among them. In a genre, certain structures are to be found operative in regulating the relations between the elements of the texts that belong to the genre. It is also important to note that if we say that a certain structure is manifested in the relations between the elements of the texts, it should mean nothing more than that that structure in question is predominant in the genre. "This dominance," says Todorov, "has quantitative aspects (it designates the type of relation most frequent between units) as well as qualitative ones (these relations between units appear at privileged moments)."[1]

A speech act does not only communicate a certain message, but also carries with it certain intended

[1] Todorov (1981), p. 41.

effects to the reader. The texts of the genre wan-ko, for instance, do not just represent a philsophy of life conceived by the wan-ko poets and the mass consciousness of their times; they are also intended "to influence the attitude of the reader, persuade him, and ultimately change him."[2] A structure can be said to be predominant in wan-ko if it is favourable to the representation of the themes or if it appears as an operative function which is necessary for the intended effects of the genre.

We shall begin our study of the relations in praesentia between the thematic units of wan-ko by following the traditional distinction between temporal and spatial structures of aesthetic forms made by Lessing in his book Laokoon. Lessing argues that because of the sensuous nature of the art medium and the conditions of human perception there are internal aesthetic rules which govern the creation and perception of different artistic forms. In the plastic arts, such as painting and sculpture, the structure is necessarily spatial as the parts are arranged in juxtaposition and are visible as a whole in an instant of time. The structure of literature, on the other hand, must be temporal as it makes use of language which is composed of a succession of words or sounds to be perceived through time. Accordingly, in order to conform to this limit imposed on the structure

[2] Wellek and Warren, p. 23.

of literature by its medium, the thematic units of a literary text must follow a certain narrative sequence.

The limitation of temporal structure in literature as it is postulated by Lessing may seem out-of-date in view of the development of modern literature. During the last century, literature has been moving in the direction of spatial form, in poetry as well as in prose. This tendency is best exemplified by Ezra Pound's definition of "image." An image is defined by Pound as "one which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time." This definition of an image creates a special problem for traditional reading, for the reader can no longer rely on the time-logic of thinking in language. Disparate ideas and emotions are not arranged in a sequence of time, but they are presented spatially as a complex to be captured in an instant of time. Hence the reader has to reorient his linguistic conception in order to adapt his way of thinking to the spatial structure of language in modern literature. As Joseph Frank explains:

> Since the primary reference of any word-group is to something inside the poem itself, language in modern poetry is really reflexive. The meaning-relationship is completed only by the simultaneous perception in space of word-groups that have no comprehensible relation to each other when read consecutively in time.[3]

[3] Joseph Frank, The Widening Gyre: Crisis and Mastery in Modern Poetry (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1963), p. 13.

According to Frank, the spatial form of literature is not to create pictorial effects. It asks the reader "to suspend the process of individual reference temporarily until the entire pattern of internal references can be apprehended as a unity."[4]

It should be understood that the argument of Lessing against the spatial form in literature was an attack on the pictorial poetry which had become popular in his day. He suggested that this type of poetry was doomed to failure because its aim to paint picture with words contradicted the time-logic of language, which was the medium of literature. Lessing's conception of the language of poetry is entirely different from that of the Chinese critics. In fact, poetry is often compared with painting in China and the critical terms for the two aesthetic forms are always interchangeable. Generally speaking, pictorial poetry has been a popular genre in Chinese poetry. Pictorial effects, in most cases, are desirable and it is a merit that "there is painting in poetry 詩中有畫 ."[5]

Lessing's theory of the temporal form in literature obviously cannot be applied to the pictorial poetry in Chinese literature, the achievement of which is exactly

[4] Frank, p. 13.

[5] For a detailed discussion of the relation between Chinese poetry and painting and the application of Lessing's theory to Chinese poetry, see Chien Chung-shu 錢鍾書, Chiu-wên ssu-p'ien 舊文四篇 (Shanghai: Shanghai Ku-chi ch'u-pan-she 上海古籍出版社, 1979), pp. 1-49.

its pictorial effects. And in Chinese poetry in general, there is a natural tendency towards spatial structure. Images are often juxtaposed in spatial relationships and the reader is required to apprehend them simultaneously as a unity. This characteristic feature of Chinese poetry is analyzed by Wai-lim Yip in this way:

> The fact is that...images, often coexisting in spatial relationships, form an atmosphere or environment, an ambience, in which the reader may move and be directly present, poised for a moment before he himself becomes a part of that atmosphere, an atmosphere that evokes (but does not state) an aura of feeling..., a situation in which he may participate in completing the aesthetic experience of an intense moment, the primary form of which the poet has arrested in concrete data.[6]

We may get this "aesthetic experience" in most Chinese poems, including those of the wan-ko genre. For example, the images in the following lines from T'ao Ch'ien's wan-ko form the atmosphere or ambience of the poem in their spatial relationships:

> How broad and vast the wild grasses stretch;
> White poplars also sigh and sough.
> In the heavy frost of the mid-ninth month,
> I am carried out to the distant wild fields.
> On four sides there is no human dwelling,
> Except for the tall mounds rising high.
> The horses turn skyward and neigh;
> The wind is lonely and depressed.[7]

[6] Wai-lim Yip, "Classical Chinese and Modern Anglo-American Poetry: Convergence of languages and Poetry," Comparative Literature Studies, 11, No. 1 (March 1974), 26.

[7] The present seventh and eighth lines follow the text of the poem collected in Wên-hsüan and T'ao Yüan-ming chi 陶淵明集. In Yüeh-fu shih-chi, these two lines are written as: 鳥亦动哀鸣 心比自萧條。

荒草何茫茫，
白楊亦蕭蕭。
嚴霜九月中，
送我出遠郊。
四面無人居，
高墳正嶕嶢。
馬為仰天鳴，
風為自蕭條。

In these lines, the flow of time shifts to the background or disappears, and only the fourth line conveys a sense of the progression of time through the activity of carrying the coffin from the city to the distant countryside. In the third line, the expression "mid-ninth month" represents the feeling of coldness and gloominess rather than gives a specific time reference. As a whole, the images in these lines coexist in a synchronic mode because they are related to one another by the principle of similarity, forming "an atmosphere that evokes...an aura of feeling." The reader has to perceive all these similar images simultaneously so that a dreary and mournful atmosphere is created.

Spatial structure is important in the setting of a dreary and mournful atmosphere for the wan-ko poem. Usually, the images are visual and form a spatial complex which has pictorial effects. Generally speaking, the pictorial description of the funeral and the graveyard in a wan-ko poem is intended to express emotions or

feelings through the scenes. Actually, emotion (ch'ing 情) and scene (ching 景) are often inseparable in Chinese poetry, as it has been theorized by many Chinese literary critics. Wang Fu-chih 王夫之(1619-1692), for one, thus emphasizes the fusion of emotion and scene:

> Emotion and scene are named differently, but they actually cannot be separated. Those who catch the spirit of poetry can fuse the two marvellously, leaving no boundary line between them. And those who are ingenious can have emotion in scene and scene in emotion.[8]
> 情景名為二，中實不可離。神於詩者，妙合無垠。巧者則有情中景，景中情。

The theory of the fusion of emotion and scene may partly explain why pictorial effects are particularly favoured by Chinese poets; for emotions and feelings can be expressed in a more indirect manner through the spatially organized visual images. As for wan-ko, since the most essential generic convention is its being sung in a funeral, the feelings conveyed in the poems are those of grief, dreariness and loneliness, which are frequently fused with the descriptions of the funeral and the graveyard. Besides, the compatibility between scene and emotion in wan-ko enables the two to fuse more easily.

[8] Wang Fu-chih, Hsi-t'ang yung-jih hsü-lun 夕堂永日緒論, in Kuo Shao-yü, III, 32. For a discussion of the fusion of ch'ing and ching in Chinese poetry, see James J. Y. Liu (1975), pp. 40-43.

Now spatial structure is found to be an operative function of the relations between the thematic elements of wan-ko not only because it creates the atmosphere or the aura of feeling appropriate to the context of the genre, but also because it can enhance the representation of certain themes of the genre. While the atmosphere of wan-ko is formed mainly by the similarity of the images, the themes of the genre especially favour the principle of contrast. Hence antithesis is frequently employed in the syntagmatic relations between the thematic units of wan-ko poems. We have mentioned that antithesis is a distinctive characteristic of Chinese poetry, especially in the Regulated Verse of the T'ang Dynasty. It is singled out here as a predominant syntactical function of wan-ko not only because of its frequent appearances, but also because of its qualitative aspects in the thematic representation of the genre.

Man in time, as we have said, is the central topic of the genre wan-ko and is associated with a variety of themes concerning life and death. Time, as an objective, abstract and absolute entity, is for most of the time beyond and outside man's perception. Its subjective and personal qualities can be felt or realized by man only in relative terms. Life is short and transitory when it is contrasted with the eternity of death. Everything in this mundane world is transient when it is placed in the eternal nature. As the wan-ko poets try to get hold of

time in the face of death, they find themselves trapped in its turbulent flow, between life and death, in their own mortality. Hence in wan-ko poems life and death are often placed in contiguity and in contrast with each other to form antithetical couplets so that the time motif is evoked from their spatial relationship.

Examples of such antithetical couplets are abundant in the genre. The first one we shall examine is Miao Hsi's.

Shêng-shih yu kuo-tu
Life-time sojourn country-capital
Ssŭ-mo ch'i chung-yeh
Death-nonexistence left middle-countryside
(When I was alive, I sojourned in the capital;
As I am dead, I was left in the wide fields.)

生時遊國都，
死沒棄中野。

In both lines, the grammatical structure is: adverb + verb + noun. The words in each line form exactly antithetical pairs with their antonyms in the other line. In the antithesis of "life" (shêng-shih) to "death" (ssŭ-mo), the brevity of life is felt as time shifts quickly from life to death in the space of one line. "To sojourn" (yu) is contrasted with "to be left or discarded" (ch'i) and "the capital" (kuo-tu) is antithetical to "the wide field" (chung-yeh). While the capital is the place where the intellectuals seek fame, officialdom and wealth, the wide fields are traditionally their burial ground. According to these two antitheses, it is to be understood

that life is only a sojourn and that the body, and everything that a man treasures in life, is to be discarded when he dies. Fame, officialdom and wealth are thus transient. The thematic units of the above antithetical couplet are related to one another in spatial relationship so that the states of life and death are captured simultaneously in contrast with each other as a unity to bring out the themes of the ephemerality of life and the transiency of the mundane world.

These two themes, the ephemerality of life and the transiency of the mundane world, are conventionally expressed by similar antithetical couplets between life and death in the genre wan-ko. Some of them are as follows:

Hsi chü ssŭ-min chai
Past live four-people house
Chin t'o wan-kuei lin
Now lodge ten-thousand-ghosts neighbourhood
(In the past I lived in the house of people;
Now I dwell in the neighbourhood of ghosts.
(Lu Chi, 2)

昔居四民宅，
今託萬鬼鄰。

Hsi wei ch'i-ch'ih ch'ü
Past be seven-foot body
Chin ch'êng hui yü ch'en
Now become ashes and dust
(In the past my body was seven feet tall;
Now it has become ashes and dust.)
(Lu Chi, 2)

昔為七尺軀，
今成灰與塵。

Tso-mu t'ung wei jên
Yesterday-evening same be men
Chin-tan tsai kuei-lu
Today-morning in ghosts-roster
(Last evening I was a man like you;
This morning I was in the roster of ghosts.)
(T'ao Ch'ien, 2)

昨暮同為人，
今旦在鬼錄。

Hsi tsai kao-t'ang ch'in
Past in high-hall sleep
Chin su huang-ts'ao hsiang
Now lodge wild-grasses country
(In the past I slept in the high hall;
Now I lodge in the country of wild grasses.
(T'ao Ch'ien, 3)

昔在高堂寢，
今宿荒草鄉。

Chao fa kao-t'ang shang
Dawn begin high-hall above
Mu su Huang-ch'üan hsia
Dusk lodge Yellow-Springs beneath
(At dawn I set off from the High Hall;
At dusk I lodge beneath the Yellow Springs.)
(Miao Hsi)

朝發高堂上，
暮宿黃泉下。

In most of the above antithetical couplets, the contrast is grammatical as well as semantic: the contrasted words are of the same grammatical category, noun against noun, verb against verb, etc. Thus the contrast between life and death, or the past and the present, in wan-ko often falls into a conventional pattern. This conventional pattern of contrast, on the one hand, makes the poem sound impersonal and proverbial. On the other hand, the

reader can immediately recognize the contrast and the themes it invokes.

Antithetical couplets are also used in the representation of other themes associated with the topic of time. In addition to the implication of the brevity of life, the couplet

> In the past my body was seven feet tall;
> Now it has become ashes and dust

especially suggests that the body is corruptible. So is the following contrast between the body in life and in death:

> Shêng-shih huang-lan t'i
> Life-time fragrant-clean body
> Hsiao-ch'ung chin wei tsai
> Small-insects now do disaster
> (In life my body was clean and fragrant;
> Now the small insects bring it disaster.)
> (Pao Chao)
> 生時芳蘭体，
> 小蟲今為災。

The decaying body is all the more horrible and grotesque when it is perceived together with the living body, once so clean and so fresh. And in the following antithesis:

> Jên wang yu huan-sui
> Man go have return-year
> Wo hsing wu kuei-nien
> I walk without return-year
> (The time will come for a traveller to go back home;
> The year of my return will never come once I was gone.)
> (Lu Chi, 2)

人往有返歲，
我行無歸年。

the semantic contrast of the journey in life to the journey into death suggests the theme of the eternity of death.

All in all, we have found that the spatial structure is frequently manifested in the antithetical couplets of wan-ko poems. In these couplets, contrasting thematic elements coexist in spatial relationship and are to be perceived against each other in an instant of time. Although wan-ko poems are not written in regulated verse, this type of structure is predominant in the genre because it is especially appropriate to the semantic representation of the themes concerning time, life and death.

However, it should be clear that the spatial structure, antithesis in particular, is only operative in the micro-structure of the wan-ko text, in which individual themes are represented. As for the macro-structure, or the global semantic representation of the fictional world, the thematic elements are always arranged in a temporal order. To speak more explicitly, the particular context of wan-ko makes it necessary for the overall structure of the poem to follow a narrative sequence of time.

We have already seen how the funeral origin of the genre influences both the pragmatic and semantic aspects

of wan-ko poems. Now this origin also accounts for the overall temporal structure of these poems. It is a generic convention for a wan-ko poet to compose his poem in the context of a funeral. In the fictional world created by the text, the poet can tell his experience of death and his reflection on life to his readers. The diachronic mode of this imaginary funeral builds up linearly progressive relationships between the thematic elements of the text. In other words, the funeral creates a temporal order in the poetic structure of wan-ko and the reader has to imagine himself following the procession of the funeral to the burial ground and eventually shares the poet's experience of death.

Such a temporal structure can be observed in Miao Hsi's wan-ko poem:

> When I was alive, I sojourned in the capital;
> As I am dead, I was left in the wide fields.
> At dawn I set off from the high hall;
> At dusk I lodged beneath the Yellow Springs.
> The white sun sinks into the Gulf of Yü,
> With its chariot hung up and steeds resting.
> Although the Heaven is wise and mighty,
> How can my life be restored to me?
> My body and form are losing shape,
> Teeth and hair will soon fall away.
> It has been so since the ancient times;
> Who can escape death?

In the poem, although the time references are shifting quickly and suddenly between the past and the present, we can still reconstruct the temporal order of its macro-structure as follows:

1. the dawn, beginning of the funeral
2. the dusk, burial of the dead

3. setting of the sun

4. the night, dead body lying in the grave

5. corruption of the corpse

The scheme constructed above may be taken as a model for the temporal structure of the genre wan-ko, even though it appears in varied forms in other wan-ko poems. In the poem of Miao Hsi, there are a lot of ellipses of events between the actions described. In the first wan-ko poem of Lu Chi, for instance, the funeral is described in fuller details. Consequently, the temporal relations between the thematic units are more obviously shown:

1. divination (for the burial ground) before the funeral

2. coffin lying in the hall on the day of the funeral

3. crying of the mourners

4. coming of friends and relatives to the funeral

5. putting the coffin on the hearse

6. parting of the dead man from his house (beginning of the funeral)

7. funeral procession on the road

8. mourning at the grave

9. final parting between the dead and the mourners

The events narrated in Lu Chi's poem are arranged strictly in a sequence of time, from the preparation for the funeral until its end.

After studying the above two poems, we can see how the temporal structure of wan-ko is necessitated by the

funeral context of the genre. Firstly, the narration of the funeral in a wan-ko poem immediately informs the reader of the genre of the poem so that he can apply his knowledge of a set of rules governing that genre to the interpretation of the literary text. Secondly, the sequential descriptions of the funeral activities can stimulate the imagination of the reader; therefore, he is able to project himself into the represented narrator, i.e., the dead person, in the funeral procession. Finally, through the progression of the imaginary funeral, the reader can get the experience of death and arrive at the same philosophical conclusion suggested by the poet. This process of communication will be illustrated by the first wan-ko poem of T'ao Ch'ien:

> How broad and vast the wild grasses stretch;
> White poplars also sigh and sough.
> In the heavy frost of the mid-ninth month,
> I am carried out to the distant wild fields.
> On four sides there is no human dwelling,
> Except for the tall mounds rising high.
> The horses turn skyward and neigh;
> The wind is lonely and depressed.
> Once the dark chamber has been sealed,
> For a thousand years there will not be dawn again.
> For a thousand years there will not be dawn again;
> The worthy and wise men can do nothing about it.
> Those who came to see me off
> Have all returned to their homes.
> My kin may have some lingering grief,
> And the others have sung their songs.
> But where is the one who has died?
> His body is left to merge with the round of the hill.

荒草何茫茫，
白楊亦蕭蕭。
嚴霜九月中，
送我出遠郊。
四面無人居，
高墳正嶕嶢。
馬為仰天鳴，
風為自蕭條，
幽室一已閉，
千年不復朝，
千年不復朝，
賢達無奈何，
向來相送人，
各已歸其家，
親戚或餘悲，
他人亦已歌，
死去何所道，
託體同山阿。

Although the description of the funeral in this wan-ko poem of T'ao Ch'ien is not as elaborated and detailed as in that of Lu Chi, the macro-structure of the thematic elements closely follows the linear progression of time in the funeral. The hsing 興 lines which begin the poem invoke the desolate and dreary ambience of the wan-ko poem. Then the reader is invited to join with the dead person in the funeral procession from the city to the wild fields. In the gloomy and depressed setting of the graveyard, the reader witnesses

how the tomb is sealed forever, the mourners return to their homes and the dead is left alone in his grave. After travelling with the dead person on his final journey from life to death and witnessing all the formalities of the funeral, the reader is at last convinced by the final two lines that life is transient and death is natural.

We have demonstrated that the macro-structure of the wan-ko genre is determined by the temporal order of its funeral context. A complementary type of relations to the time-logic structure is causality. The units of causality are sequential for one unit causes or is caused by another. According to Todorov, there are two main opposed types of causality:

> From our perspective, one opposition matters more than any other: do the minimal units of causality enter into an immediate relation with each other, or do they do so only by the intermediary of a general law of which they happen to be the illustrations? Given the use made of the one causality and the other, we shall designate a narrative in which the former causality predominates as mythological narrative, and the one in which the latter does as ideological.[9]

Thus, mythological narrative structure is manifested in the relations between units of immediate causality: an action provokes a state or another action, or is provoked by a state or another action. On the other hand, ideological narrative structure "establishes no direct

[9] Todorov (1981), p. 43.

relation between the units that constitute it; but these appear to our eyes as so many manifestations of one and the same idea, of a single law."[10] Although Todorov uses the two terms "mythological" and "ideological" to denote two opposed types of narrative, they are fundamentally two types of structure of the organization of thematic elements. Therefore, we shall use them to differentiate the relations between the units of wan-ko poems accordingly.

In the genre wan-ko, the thematic elements are rarely immediate causal to one another, or seldom do we find that one unit is the direct consequence of another. In other words, mythological structure is not a generic feature of wan-ko. Instead, ideological structure of organization predominates the causal relationships in the wan-ko texts.

The narration of the funeral and the various aspects of life and death in wan-ko poems has one main purpose: it serves to illustrate the ideas or general laws postulated by the wan-ko poets in their philosophy of life. Naturally, ideological presentation and argumentation are indispensable to the genre. Very often, the thematic elements within one couplet or of two consecutive couplets are related to each other because they manifest the same idea or general law concerning the

[10] Todorov (1981), p. 44.

states of life and death. In the wan-ko of Miao Hsi, for example, there is no direct causal relation between the two lines of the couplet:

> My body and form are losing shape,
> Teeth and hair will soon fall away.

However, they manifest the same idea that "the body is corruptible" and are thus related to each other. Similarly, no immediate causality can be established between the couplet:

> When I was alive, I sojourned in the capital;
> As I am dead, I was left in the wide fields

and the consecutive one:

> At dawn I set off from the high hall;
> At dusk I lodged beneath the Yellow Springs.

Again, the two antithetical couplets are placed contiguously to each other as they are related ideologically through the same law that governs the transiency of life.

When ideological structure is manifested in the relation between similar units which illustrate the same idea or general law, as it is in the above two examples, the relation between these units can also be taken as parallelism. But there is another form of ideological structure which should be taken strictly as causality. This is the one manifested in the relation between two thematic elements with one being the logical conclusion

of the other. It is different from mythological structure because in this type of structure one idea causes or is caused by another idea. This type of ideological structure is especially important in the development of philosophical argumentation, where logical conclusion if often to be drawn from preceding ideas or states of affairs. In the wan-ko of Miao Hsi again, the final line "Who can escape death?" is obviously a conclusion following the preceding line "It has been so since the ancient times." In the same manner, the final couplet of Pao Chao's wan-ko,

> All the heroes have died,
> Where are the other people?

arrives at the conclusion that death is inevitable from a historical awareness of the final destiny of all the heroes who have passed away.

In our study of the themes of wan-ko, we gave an account of how the popularity of the genre in the Wei and Chin periods is largely due to the chaotic socio-political situation of the times. In short, in their efforts to escape from all the ills and sorrow they were faced with in the world, the intellectuals attempted to establish through the writing of wan-ko an escapist philosophy of life. As they tried to put forward their raison d'être for escapism, ideological structure always appeared at the crucial moments in the organization of arguments for their philosophical ideas. We shall

analyze a wan-ko poem of T'ao Ch'ien to see how ideological structure is operative in the organization of the thematic elements of the text.

When there is life there must be death;
To die early is not short-lived.
Last evening I was a man like you;
This morning I was in the roster of ghosts.
The vital breath of the spirit disperses;
The dead body remains in the empty coffin.
My young kids cry, wanting their father;
My good friends, touching my body, weep.
Gain or loss I'll not again perceive;
Right or wrong, how can I know?
Hundreds or thousands of years later,
Who'll know whether it's glory or disgrace?
All that I regret was when I was alive,
Never had I drunk enough wine.
(T'ao Ch'ien, 2)

In this poem, ideological causality plays a decisive role in the organization of relations between the thematic units. Sometimes, it is necessary "to carry abstraction quite far in order to find the relation between two actions whose copresence appears at first glance purely contingent."[11]

The first two lines are two general statements that death is inevitable (line 1) and that there is no absolute standard for measuring a man's life-span (line 2). However, there seems to be no direct relation between these two contiguous statements as there is a missing link between the fact and the ideological conclusion. This missing step of the argument is to be

[11] Todorov (1981), pp. 44-45.

supplemented by the second couplet (lines 3-4) which is an antithesis illustrating the theme of the ephemerality of life. Since life is brief for all men and death is inevitable, there should be no difference between longevity and premature death. The third couplet (lines 5-6) provides an explanation for the preceding theme that life is transient. It represents the traditional dichotomy between the spirit and the body. The body is nothing more than a temporary house in the world for the spirit to lodge in. Once a man dies, his spirit will disperse and his body will become an empty form to be left to merge with nature. Therefore, man's life is just a sojourn which is brief and transitory.

The fourth couplet (lines 7-8) gives a description of the grief and emotion of ordinary men for death. But the poet goes on to explain such grief and emotion are unnatural because, when a man has died, his corpse is senseless and perceives no artificial differences imposed on life by human existence (lines 9-10). Furthermore, when the eternity of death is taken into consideration, the sense and criteria of glory and disgrace are also artificial and transient (lines 11-12). It should be emphasized that the relations between the thematic elements represented in these lines are established through the ideological development of the poet's philosophical arguments.

Now the final couplet (lines 13-14) appears to be irrelevant to the previous arguments at first glance.

Actually, this is a logical conclusion drawn from the far-reaching ideological abstraction of the preceding presentation and reasoning. Since life is transient and death is inevitable and eternal, death should be the natural state of man. The natural self of man is senseless, without any artificial differences between glory and disgrace, gain and loss, happiness and sorrow, etc. Hence the only regret of the poet is that he could not get rid of his senses and perception completely to attain his natural self (through drinking) when he was alive, so he had to suffer from the unnatural feelings of pain and grief.

After the above analysis of the wan-ko poem of T'ao Ch'ien, we can see that ideological structure is manifested not only in the relations between the thematic elements, but also in the organization of the macro-structure of the genre.

Now that we have shown that causal-temporal relationships are predominant in the overall structure of wan-ko poems, the question is: can we call wan-ko a "narrative" genre? By narrative, we refer to writing which has a narrator and a plot. "Plot," according to Scholes and Kellogg, "can be defined as the dynamic, sequential element in narrative literature."[12] A plot, therefore, can be viewed as a causal-temporal organization

[12] Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), pp. 4, 207-08.

of actions and events. Contrary to narrative, a lyric is usually defined as a direct expression of passion and feelings, "a pure cri de coeur," without any plot, but the elements of which are organized in the spatial structure.[13]

Obviously, there are reasons for calling wan-ko a narrative genre. Firstly, a wan-ko poem is supposed to be sung by a fictional narrator, usually the dead person in the funeral. Secondly, for most of the wan-ko poems, there is a plot: the actions and events of the funeral are narrated in a causal-temporal sequence.

On the other hand, one may also argue against the use of the term "narrative" in these wan-ko poems. Although a wan-ko poem has a fictional narrator, the thoughts and feelings expressed in the poem should be identified with the real thoughts and feelings of the poet himself. Besides, the thematic units of the poem are often arranged in spatial relationships, antithesis in particular.

The dilemma of whether or not wan-ko is a narrative genre certainly cannot be solved by simply counting the number of causal-temporal relations and that of spatial relations in the poems. Sometimes, both types of relations are manifested between two thematic elements. In some cases, even though there are specific references to time,

[13] See Day-Lewis, pp. 3-5. Cf. M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (1953; rpt. New York: W. W. Norton, 1958), pp. 84-85.

the shift of time is so rapid, often in the space of one line, that the temporal relationship also shifts to the background, and the reader is forced to perceive the contrasting word-groups in space simultaneously. Just look at the following couplet which we have studied several times before:

> At dawn I set off from the high hall;
> At dusk I lodged beneath the Yellow Springs.

The relation between these two lines can be conceived in a temporal order, as it is clear that they follow each other in a sequence of time, from the morning to the evening. But these two lines actually form an antithesis which consists of strict antonyms. Of course, this antithetical relation between the units requires the reader to capture the two contrasting thematic elements as a unity in an instant of time, but not to read them in a temporal sequence. We may also observe that the two lines are in fact derived from the "time-honored formulae" of "in the morning I do such-and-such; in the evening I do so-and-so" or "in the morning I set off from so-and-so; in the evening I lodge in such-and-such."[14] Thus the references to time in these two lines are actually made for the regular disposition of contrasting elements. The paradox of temporal and spatial structures

[14] See David Hawkes, pp. 49-50.

in them demonstrates just "the conflict between the time-logic implicit" in the convention of poetry.[15]

Generally speaking, when both temporal and spatial orders are manifested in the relation between two thematic elements of a wan-ko poem, the latter always appears in a more privileged position than the former. But where the macro-structure is concerned, it is always the causal-temporal relationships come into prominence. These phenomena can be explained by Tökei's theory of the elegiac temperament in his analysis of Li-sao:

> Let us remind the reader: in our earlier essay [Naissance de l'élégie chinoise] we tried to demonstrate just by an analysis of the Li-sao that the genre essence of elegy is a peculiar two-phasicality of contents, which lays the foundation of this genre's epico-lyric character as well as its constant vacillation between delineation and expression, realism of style and fantastic imagination, etc., and also the dualism of versification.[16]

According to Tökei, the most essential feature of elegy is precisely its "epico-lyric character": both narrative and lyrical, temporal and spatial, realistic and imaginary and so on.

Hence it is no accident that we find in the genre wan-ko a blending of both causal-temporal and spatial structures. Although we have refused to translate wan-ko into "elegy" because of the particular pragmatic features of the genre, it cannot be denied that wan-ko

[15] See Frank, p. 13.

[16] Tökei, pp. 108-09.

can be described as "elegiac" when the semantic representation and the syntactic structure are considered. For it is the dualism of life and death and the fatal recognition of man in time that make wan-ko and elegy a universal poetic experience.

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